

THE .

FRENCH IN ALGIERS.

I.

THE SOLDIER OF THE FOREIGN LEGION.

THE PRISONERS OF ABD-EL-KADER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND FRENCH BY

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LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1846

P R E F A C E.

CLEMENS LAMPING, the author of the first part of this little volume, is a young Lieutenant in the Oldenburg service, who, tired of the monotonous life of a garrison, resigned his commission in July, 1839, and went to Spain to win his spurs under Espartero. Unfortunately he was detained by contrary winds, and arrived just as the treaty of Bergara had put an end to the war.

After spending six months at Madrid in abortive attempts to join the army in Arragon, then the seat of war, he resolved to go to Africa, and take part in the French crusade against the infidels. He accordingly went to Cadiz, encountering many adventures on his way through La Mancha and Andaluzia, and thence to Algiers, where he entered the foreign legion as a volunteer.

After two years of danger and hardship, the author returned to Oldenburg, having lost many illusions, and gained some experience. His sovereign restored him to

his former grade in the service of Oldenburg, where he sits at his ease by his own fireside, and relates his adventures to his friends.

Lieutenant Lamping's Reminiscences are followed by the abridgement of a narrative of five months' captivity among the Arabs, by M. de France, a lieutenant in the French navy. The author modestly assures his readers that he is better skilled in the management of a ship than of his pen. and that his book would never have been published but at the request of his friends. It has nevertheless reached a second edition in France.

L. D. G.

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THE FRENCH IN ALGIER.

CHAPTER I.

Coleah—Arab Coffee-houses—The Hakim's—Court of Justice—Arab Women and Domestic Life—Marriages—False Alarm—Sof the Modern Hâfiz—Grief for the Departed Glory of the Moors—Abubeker's Piety rewarded.

Coleah, September, 1841.

At last, my dear friend, after so many hardships and such various wanderings, I have leisure to write to you; and I have much, very much, to tell. The events of my life have lately followed each other in such rapid succession, that the dangers and sorrows of the noble, much-enduring Odysseus, nay, even the immortal adventures of the valiant Knight of La Mancha, are mere child's play in comparison with my own.

Since the month of April we have scarce had time to take breath; so rapidly did expedition follow expedition, and *razzia razzia*. The new Governor, Bugeaud, naturally enough wishes to show that he is equal to his post. His predecessor, Vallée, drew upon himself the imputation of indolence, but no one can deny to Bugeaud the possession of great energy and untiring activity. He encounters the Arabs with their own weapons, harassing them with incessant attacks, and burning and plundering the whole country. We have made two very important expeditions; the first against Thaza, a strong fortress belonging to Abd-el-Kader, situated on the borders of the desert. After destroying this place, we returned through the iron gates (*portes de fer*) to our own camp; this expedition occupied about four

weeks. A few days afterwards we started again to throw provisions into Milianah, and to lay waste the plains of the Chellif with fire and sword. It was exactly harvest time. In order to cut off from the Bedouins all means of existence, it was of course necessary to drive away their cattle and to burn their corn. Before long the whole plain looked like a sea of fire.

These expeditions, sent out in the very hottest season of the year, had such an effect upon the health of the soldiers, that the Governor was compelled to allow them a short rest. The regiment to which I belonged had scarcely a third part fit for service, the other two-thirds were either dead or in the hospital. We were accordingly sent to Coleah to recruit our strength.

You will have a tolerably correct idea of our recruiting quarters when I tell you that one day is passed on guard, another in reconnoitring the enemy for several hours, and the third in working at the dry ditch (a sort of *pendant* to the great wall of China) intended to defend the plain of the Metidja against any sudden attacks of the Hadjutes. I assure you, however, that we think this life vastly agreeable, and consider ourselves as well off as if we were in Abraham's bosom. There was a time, indeed, when I should not have been quite so contented with my lot, but every thing is relative in this best of all possible worlds.

Coleah is a true Arab town, which stands on the south-eastern declivity of the Sahel range of mountains, in a charming little nook, and is well supplied with water.

We are only twelve leagues from Algiers and about three from the sea, the proximity to which makes the place extremely healthy. The constant sea breeze renders the heat even of this season quite tolerable.

At our feet is stretched the vast plain of the Metidja bounded by the blue hills of the lesser Atlas range. We are quartered in a fortified camp outside the town, on a small eminence which commands it. Of course all the gates of the town and the market-place are guarded by our troops. My leisure hours, which, indeed, are not too many, are generally passed in sauntering about the streets.

The inhabitants of Coleah are pure descendants of the Moors, and still retain some traces of their former refinement; you must not confound them with the Bedouins and Kabyles, who always

have been, and still are the lowest in point of civilisation. I have nowhere found the Arab so polished and so attractive as at Coleah, not even at Algiers and Oran; in those towns, their intercourse with the French has called forth all their rapacity, and spoiled the simplicity of their manners. It is a remarkable fact that in all these towns near the sea the Spanish language is still spoken, of course in a most corrupt dialect; a proof that some connection with Spain has constantly existed—often, no doubt, a very reluctant one on their parts: as in the reign of Charles V., who conquered great part of this coast.

To me this is very welcome, as it enables me to talk with the Arabs; it is not however easy to enter into conversation with them, as they are almost always silent and reserved towards strangers. In order to get them to talk it is necessary first to inspire confidence.

All my spare time is passed in the Arab coffee-house, the resort of the fashion and aristocracy of Coleah, and I have already succeeded in making some acquaintances. I have even obtained marks of evident goodwill from them by my earnest and sympathising attention to their singers and story-tellers, who never fail to attend the best coffee-houses.

The clerk of the Hakim (the chief magistrate) is a great friend of mine. He is an exceedingly well-informed man, and with you he would be called "Mr. Secretary." He knows the whole Koran by heart, besides a host of Persian poems.

Like every man of sense he is exceedingly modest, lamenting his ignorance, and inquiring diligently into our European habits and manners. I have occasionally had the pleasure of seeing my friend Ben Jussuf (for that is his name) occupied in the fulfilment of his duties as clerk. Every Friday is kept by the Arabs as a holiday on which markets are held and judgments given. On this day the Hakim sits in the public place before the great coffee-house, and holds his court; on his right hand stands his clerk who commits his judgments to paper, and on his left the executioner who inflicts the punishments awarded by the Hakim on the spot. This generally consists in some fifty or hundred strokes of the bastinado, and sometimes even in death; the latter, however, only for political offences, such as treasonable correspondence with the enemy, &c. Should the case be doubtful, the

Hakim orders a certain number of strokes of the bastinado to be given to both parties, and takes to himself the object of contention, generally a sheep or a donkey—a proceeding only differing from our own inasmuch as it has the great advantage of being more summary. If any one is too profuse in his excuses, the Hakim says to the executioner, “Give my comrade (among the Arabs every one is a comrade) some thirty strokes of the bastinado, to teach him not to confuse me any more with his ingenious evasions.” In this country, you see, an advocate’s fees would not be very high.

Coleah is held in great reverence by the Arabs as it contains Abd-el-Kader’s vault, in which are deposited the bodies of several members of his family. The French have spared this tomb, in consideration of which Abd-el-Kader has vowed never to attack the town or its immediate neighbourhood.

The Hakim belongs to the family of the Emir, and is very rich: the sheath and handle of his yataghan are of pure gold, and his horses the finest I ever saw. He is the ideal of a noble Arab—terrible to his enemies, hospitable and munificent to his friends, and especially charitable to the poor. I have seen him during the great fast, when the Mahomedans may eat nothing till after sunset, call together some thirty beggars every evening before his door, bring them food, and wait upon them himself with the help of his three grown up sons.

The beggars feasted upon kuskussu (porridge made with barley meal) and baked mutton with great dignity and grace; and when they were satisfied they rose, kissed the Hakim on the shoulders and cheeks, and departed. The most contradictory qualities are often united in the Arab nature—harshness and benevolence, cruelty and generosity, rapacity and munificence: we should beware how we condemn them without further knowledge of their character, and we must on no account measure them by our Christian and European standard.

The great fast of the Mahomedans, which lasts forty days, began a few days ago. During all this time the Arabs eat nothing during the whole day, and are especially enjoined by the Prophet to be constant in devotion and to give freely to the poor:—and the Arab is a very strict observer of all his religious

duties. Three times a day, at the hours of sunrise, mid-day, and sunset, the loud voice of the marabout, or priest, is heard from the minaret of the mosque summoning the faithful to prayer.

The moment the Arab hears the call of the marabout he throws himself upon the earth, wherever he may chance to be, and touches the ground with his brow, then rising again he stretches his arms toward heaven with his face turned in the direction of Mecca. His white flowing bernguse and his long beard give him a venerable and patriarchal air. Thus, surely, did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worship their God. The Arab has no hesitation in performing his devotions in the presence of the crowd, and is totally without either the false shame or the religious hypocrisy of an European.

Most Mahomedans wear a rosary of beads, which they tell while repeating sentences out of the Koran; to this is usually appended a large brass comb, with which they comb their beards during their orisons with the most solemn earnestness. The impression produced by this on Europeans is highly comical, but to the Mahomedan it seems natural enough, as any purification of the body, such as combing and washing, are to him in themselves religious acts.

They are by no means behind us in superstition, and frequently hang, as an amulet round the neck of a favourite horse, a leathern bag containing some verses out of the Koran, to protect them from evil machinations.

The Arab is great and admirable at the hour of death. I have seen many Arabs die, but never did I see one beg his life or utter any unmanly complaint. When his hour is come he recommends his soul to Mahomed, and dies.

They have physicians only for external injuries or for fevers incidental to the climate: when one of them is attacked by an internal disorder or by the decrepitude of age, his relations quietly leave him to his fate, and no one troubles his head about him again.

It was but a few days ago that I saw an Arab die thus on the threshold of his own house: he had already lain there some days with his bernguse drawn over his head. When he felt the

approach of death he exclaimed with a loud voice, " Mahomed ! Mahomed ! " and died.

The burial is conducted much in the same manner as with us. The corpse, rolled in a mantle, and with the face uncovered, is borne to the grave by four men. The priest who walks before it sings a song to which the others respond in chorus : but their song is cheerful, and their step quick ; for the departed has quitted the hardships and sorrows of this life, and now rests in Paradise beside a shady fountain, served by women whose beauty is unfading.

After the corpse has been lowered into it, the tomb is carefully bricked up, in order to prevent the jackals and hyænas from scratching up the body. The mourners then sit round the grave, and one of the near relations of the deceased gives to every one present a piece of bread and some fruit.

The fair sex is not altogether fair here, at least in my opinion. No one can deny that the Arab women have graceful figures and regular features, but they want those essential requisites of beauty—a soul and individual expression. They are all exactly alike, and their faces express but two passions—love and hate ; all nicer shades of feeling are wanting. How, indeed, would it be possible for them to acquire intellectual or bodily cultivation, when the greater part of their time is spent seated cross-legged grinding corn in a hand-mill, or asleep ?

The married women are seldom seen out of their houses, and then only closely veiled. The young girls, on the contrary, are to be found every morning at sunrise outside the gate of the town, standing by the fountain, at which they assemble with stone jars on their shoulders, to fetch water for the day's consumption. This truly Eastern scene calls to mind Rebecca at the well, drawing water for her father's flocks.

If a stranger asks a daughter of the town to give him a draught of water (*alma*), the maiden reaches him the jar with a kindly nod ; but when he has slaked his thirst she pours away the remainder and draws fresh water, for the lips of the infidel have polluted it.

The Arab women wear a white woollen garment confined under

the breast by a girdle, and a white cloth twisted round the head. Their ornaments generally consist in rings in their ears and on their ankles, which are invariably naked. One cannot deny the efficiency of this graceful manner of calling attention to the beauty of their feet, which are truly exquisite. These rings, among women of the lower class, are of silver; among those of the higher class (and here, as in every other country, there are distinctions of class), they are of gold.

A few days ago my friend Ben Jussuf invited me to go with him to his house. I, of course, seized with joy this opportunity of seeing him in his domestic circle.

He knocked at the door, which is invariably kept shut by day and by night in all Arab houses, a woman shortly appeared and inquired who was there; at Ben Jussuf's answer the door was opened, but when the woman saw me with her husband she instantly concealed her face, and was about to run away; my friend, however, commanded her to remain. She was his wife, and besides her he had two others, who were seated cross-legged in the court, one of them grinding corn in a hand-mill, the other combing the hair of a boy about five or six years old. I should have guessed them all three to be at least forty, but Ben Jussuf assured me that they were all under five-and-twenty; their faces and figures were withered, and the bloom of youth quite gone, their eyes alone still retained their fire. At twenty the Arab women begin to fade, and at thirty they are old matrons.

They all seemed to live in perfect harmony, and the manner of the women towards their lord and master was obliging even to servility. To judge by appearances, it must be easier to keep house with three wives than with one; perhaps the rule "*divide et impera*" holds good in love as well as in politics, I must however confess that I do not envy the Mahomedan gentlemen their frigid joys, nor do they seem to find much satisfaction in them themselves.

The women here are mere slaves; of that chivalrous homage paid by the Spanish Moors to their women no traces are left save in the songs and poems of the Arabs.

The children are educated by women up to their seventh year; on reaching that age the boy is put in possession of a ber-

nouse and a pony, and is no longer allowed to eat with the women; should his father be away he has supreme authority over the whole household, not excepting his own mother.

The manner of arranging a marriage is very simple among the Arabs. A man takes a sum of money or any article of value, and offers it to whomsoever he happens to meet with, saying, "Comrade! I hear you have a marriageable daughter, give her to me as a wife, and take this as a marriage gift." If the other thinks the match a suitable one, he replies, "Yes: here she is, take her with you;" and the marriage is concluded. The father must, however, warrant her to be a maid; and if the husband finds she is not, he takes her home next morning and demands his present back again.

Yesterday we made one of the most interesting reconnoitring expeditions in which I have been engaged. These expeditions occupy several hours, and are undertaken for the purpose of driving the Hadjutes out of the *rayons* of the blockhouses, and the gardens belonging to the town. The Hadjutes inhabit the Sahel mountains to the westward of Coleah, and are notoriously the most thievish set of fellows in all Africa. They are the people who, on the 1st of May, cut off the heads of about forty of our regiment at Delhi Ibrahim.

We set out before sunrise, and marched down towards the Metidja. I was detached on one side with a dozen others, to search the thicket with which all this country is covered. We followed a track trodden by wild beasts, for a human foot rarely wanders in this place. We suddenly emerged into an open space of about thirty square feet, and as we stepped out of the thicket a large panther stood before us, at about twenty feet distance, and gazed at us with a look of mingled wonder and indignation as though he would say, "What seek ye in my kingdom?" We, however, appealed to the right of the strongest—two or three muskets were instantly levelled and discharged at him, but with one bound the panther disappeared among the bushes. A ball or two must have reached him, but if they do not happen to hit him on the head, which is his only tender point, he takes no heed of them. These beasts, and still more hyenas and jackals, abound

in this district, as is shown from the ridiculously small price which is asked by the Arabs for the skin of these animals.

The Arab chiefs consider the skin of the tiger and the panther as one of their principal ornaments. The head of the animal is generally fastened to the saddle-bow, (the head and teeth are essential,) and the skin waves to and fro with every motion of the horse, so that at a distance one might almost imagine that some wild beast had just taken a deadly spring upon the rider.

But to return to my reconnoitring expedition. On coming near the plain we turned westward, to pass the gorge in which Coleah lies. As there is no lack of water here, the most abundant vegetation prevails, and we were delighted and astonished at the extreme richness of the scene. The luxuriant aloe sends up its blossoms to a height of twenty feet, and a species of sedgy rush grows as high as a moderate house.

From thence we turned towards our dry ditch, which is nearly finished, and climbed past it up to the very top of the chain of mountains, from whence the sea is visible. Here we found plenty of fruit trees, on some of which the fruit was quite ripe; the pomegranates and the figs were delicious. In this spot the commander ordered his troops to halt. After the necessary precautions had been taken, we were allowed to gather the fruit, and were soon scattered about the gardens in all directions, filling our *shackos* and pocket handkerchiefs.

After plucking some fine pomegranates, I lay down under a shady pomegranate tree, and looked out over the sea.

I could clearly discern on the blue surface of the sea a ship whose prow was directed towards Europe, and whose sails were filled by a favourable breeze; the thought involuntarily occurred to me, "Would I were on board that ship, sailing towards my own home." This indeed looks a little like home-sickness, but I know not why any one should be ashamed of the feeling. Even Odysseus, the wisest of mortals, was not ashamed to weep aloud, and to long after his paternal hearth, his wife, and his child; and why should not I—who am the least wise of men—honestly confess that there are moments when I also long for those who are dear to me? Besides, I have seen nearly all there is to see in Algeria, the future can but be a repetition of the past.

I was on the point of beginning a touching monologue—a failing I have long been subject to—when I was startled out of my dreams by several shots, and a cry of “*Aux armes ! Aux armes !*” We all ran to our muskets, and were ready in a moment, but the alarm proved a false one. Some twenty Hadjutes, who were lying in ambuscade behind a neighbouring hill, had fired several shots at our sentinels, who thought a considerable force must be concealed there. But the moment we showed ourselves the Hadjutes fled towards the open country, chased by a squadron of our horse : the Arabs, however, got clear off, and the only damage done was to my monologue, and to the ripe pomegranates which I threw away in the hurry and confusion. It was not till about nine o’clock, just before the oppressive heat of the day, that we returned to Coleah.

The chief wealth of the inhabitants of this town consists in large herds of cattle and fruit-tree gardens ; it is surrounded by the most magnificent fruit trees as far as the eye can reach. The figs and pomegranates are now ripe, and we feast on them luxuriously. I say we, for the most complete community of goods prevails among the Arabs and ourselves. The soldier and the beggar are born communists. I must say, however, that the Arabs do not seem much to relish this same communism, for we have several times missed some of our soldiers ; it is true we found them again in the gardens, but without their heads.

The fruit here is at times extremely dangerous to the head, and when eaten immoderately, it is equally injurious to the stomach ; this is particularly the case with the figs which produce violent thirst, and if this is allayed with draughts of water fever and diarrhœa are the inevitable consequences. The fig trees bear fruit three times a year, but one of the crops is usually of inferior quality : the natives generally gather this crop and press it into large cakes ; when dry these are exceedingly wholesome, and form, throughout the year, a favourite dish at the Arab’s table. The pomegranate is a delicious fruit, and much less unwholesome. The oranges are so wholesome that any one may eat twenty a day with impunity. Unfortunately it is not till November that they are ripe.

The wild laurel grows in great quantities near the town, and attains a very considerable height ; I can boast of having

tasted the fruit of the laurel as well as its leaf. It is about the size of a strawberry and very sweet. The sight of a laurel tree always recalls to my mind that noble Roman folded in his imperial mantle, with the laurel wreathed round his bald head. Time was when I would have given the last drop of my blood for but one leaf from this same laurel wreath ; but I have now begun to perceive that when one is no emperor but a mere corporal of *voltigeurs* the laurel is only good in soup.

All Arabs of any education or wealth assemble at the coffee-house. To them it supplies the place of theatres and concerts, balls and tea-parties. There they spend the whole day, sometimes staying till past midnight. The coffee-house, like almost all other houses in the south, is built round a square court paved with white marble, in the middle of which plays a fountain. Round the court are two rows of pillars supporting the women's apartments ; the rooms all look into the court : on the outside nothing is to be seen but high dismal walls, for the Arab does not choose that inquisitive eyes should peer into his holy of holies.

The vine or ivy is generally trained up the house so as to shade the whole court, and keep out the oppressive rays of the sun. Under this natural arcade the sons of Ishmael sit on soft carpets lazily splashing with their naked feet in the water which flows from the fountain over the marble floor.

Here they imbibe coffee, sherbet, songs, and tales : in short, it is a foretaste of Paradise. The coffee is not bad, only that they drink it black and have the bad taste to reckon the grounds the best part of the coffee. Before the slave hands one the cup, he stirs it with a reed for fear the dregs should sink to the bottom.

The Arab is a passionate lover of music and poetry : the coffee-houses are, therefore, never without their poets and story-tellers. Their songs are monotonous, and they accompany them with the mandoline, as in Andalusia. Coleah possesses the best story-teller and singer in all Africa, so celebrated for the melody of his voice as to be called the second Hâfiz.

I must confess that fame has not said too much in his favour. His name is Sofi ; at the age of thirteen he had the misfortune

to lose a leg in an encounter with the Hadjutes, and since that time he has devoted himself entirely to singing and poetry. I never saw an Arab whose countenance wore so noble an expression, or whose features so clearly reflected the feelings of his soul. He does not usually come to the coffee-house till after sunset: as soon as he is seated the Arabs place themselves in a half-circle round him, with their eyes attentively fixed upon him. After striking a few notes on the mandoline, he began one day to recite a ballad of the great deeds and of the downfall of the Moorish kings. It was always the same measure, the same tune, sung now in a louder, now in a lower tone, and one would have expected its monotony to weary the hearers: but not so; the longer one listened, the more fascinating it became. First he sang the conquest of Spain, the battle of Xeres, and the death of Don Rodrigo. He then struck the cords of the mandoline more loudly, and sang the victories of Abd-el-Rahman, and the pomp and glory of Cordova, till the eyes of his hearers glistened. By slow degrees the notes became softer, and his voice trembled as he sang the death of the Abencerrages, and the shameful flight of Boabdil, the last king of Granada. The sounds of his mandoline died away, the Arabs hung their heads upon their breasts, and the pipes fell from their hands.

The unfeigned grief of the Moors touched me to the heart. I told my friend Ben Jussuf, who sat next to me, that I had visited the scenes of their former greatness, the palace of their kings—the Alhambra, and the mosque of Cordova, the Kaaba of the west.

Scarcely had he told this to the others, when they crowded round me begging me to tell all I had seen, and I thus became an involuntary story-teller, with Ben Jussuf for my interpreter. I gave them an account of the grandeur and beauty of the mosque of Cordova, its thirteen hundred columns, and the tombs of their kings. I described to them the Alhambra, the marble lions who keep watch at the palace gates, the splendid hall where the Abencerrages held their feasts, and where they were barbarously murdered. I told them that I myself had seen the traces of their noble blood which time itself had been unable to efface from the polished marble floor.

Overcome by the remembrance of the tragical fate of their most heroic race, the Arabs covered their faces with their bernouses. "Young man," said the Hakim, kissing my forehead, "thank the Prophet that he hath vouchsafed to thee the sight of these marvels."

After a pause the Hakim said, "Friend Sofi, know you not some pleasant story which may dissipate the melancholy of our comrades, who still sit with drooping heads?" and Sofi, without further entreaty, began the following tale.

"Far beyond Milianah, on the banks of the Mina, there once lived an Emir, on whom Allah had bestowed every blessing. His life was pure and blameless. He gave the fourth part of all he possessed to the poor, and the hour of prayer was more welcome to him than the hour of feasting. This Emir, whose name was Abubekr, had a mare which he loved above all other things; she was white, without spot or blemish, and more swift than the wind of the desert, and she could travel for three days without drinking a single drop of water. One evening before sun set, Abubekr stood by the brook cleaning his favourite mare. He washed her neck and her haunches, addressing her by the most endearing names, and the mare looked in his face with her soft expressive eyes as though she understood every word he said. At this moment the marabout called the hour of prayer from the minaret, but Abubekr heard him not. At last the sun sank down behind mount Atlas, and the Emir knew that the hour of prayer was past. In despair he cast himself upon the ground and cried, 'Woe is me, I have forgotten thee, O Lord the creator, for the creature; have mercy upon me, and graciously accept this sacrifice as a token of my repentance.' Having said this, he took his spear and plunged it into the breast of his mare, and she fell to the earth and died. Sorrowful, but conscious of having done aright, Abubekr returned to his dwelling, folded his bernouse about him, and slept. And Allah appeared to him in a dream and spake to him thus, 'Abubekr, I have proved thy heart, and have seen that thou walkest before me justly. I desire not the sacrifices of the just, but their good deeds, for I am gracious. Arise, thy mare liveth.' The Emir started up rejoicing and hastened to the door—there stood his darling mare, and neighed joyfully at the sight of him.

Abubekr prostrated himself and touched the dust with his forehead, exclaiming, 'Allah, thy wisdom is infinite, but thy mercy is yet greater than thy wisdom !' "

Farewell. Next week our regiment will march to Algiers, whence it will embark for Oran.

This letter is accompanied by a brief account of my adventures from the day on which I landed in Africa until now.

CHAPTER II.

Algiers—The Poetry of the Galleys—Bath—Palace at Mustapha Superieur—General Von Hulsén—I join the Foreign Legion—French Colonisation in Africa—Hassan, the Coffee-house Keeper.

Mustapha Superieur, August, 1840.

WE came in sight of the coast of Africa on the 8th of August at nine in the morning. This was the second time I had seen it; the first was in the straits of Gibraltar. But I now beheld it with far different feelings. I was about to tread the land of the Bedouin and of the Kabyle in the full enjoyment of my strength and liberty—perhaps never to return.

The first step in life is a man's own choice, the second is no longer within his control but subject to foreign and often hostile influences.

You may well shake your head, dear friend, reproach me as usual with Quixotism, and wonder how it is that the experience gained in Spain has not cooled my ardour. I allow it is cooled, but not chilled. I have still ardour enough left to venture—a true Don Quixote of the nineteenth century—a crusade for civilisation and freedom. Forward, then, and let me pass the Rubicon, without hesitation.

The steamboat strove onwards with might and main, the coast rose higher out of the sea every moment, and before very long the glorious bay in which lies Algiers, and the Sahel range of mountains lay clear before us. The town itself is built in the shape of an amphitheatre on the declivity of the Sahel hills, and when seen from a distance looks like a huge white pyramid, for the town forms a triangle the highest point of which is crowned by the Casbah—the former residence of the Dey. The bay presents an enchanting scene for a few miles eastward of Algiers. The

sides of the mountains are crowded with beautiful gardens and villas built in the noble Moorish style. On the very ridge of the Sahel is a semicircular chain of fortified camps and blockhouses intended to protect this fruitful district against the inroads of the Berbers. The harbour is so small that only a few ships can ride there, and the greater part are compelled to lie at anchor outside in the roads. We had scarce dropped one anchor when a number of small boats surrounded the ship to convey us ashore. The rowers were galley slaves who, in a melancholy air, kept time to the stroke of their oars. The subject of the song was as follows :—"An aged galley slave, with the faded ribbon of the legion of honour on his breast, stands on the pier and looks gloomily down upon the sea as though he would fathom its depths with his chains. A Marshal of France passes by and sees the ribbon on his breast. 'Where,' he asks, 'did you deserve it?' The slave answers gloomily, 'I won it in such a battle;' and the Marshal recognises the man who once saved his life. Filled with gratitude, he entreats the pardon of the king for the unhappy prisoner, and it is granted." This song made an indelible impression on my mind, and convinced me that even the galleys have a poetry of their own.

The lower part of the town which surrounds the port has already acquired a completely European character. The streets of Babazoun and of the Marine are as handsome and as elegant as the Boulevards of Paris. The upper town retains its Arab colour, and is exclusively inhabited by Moors and Jews. The streets are so narrow that it is with difficulty that two horses can pass in them; and the Arabs have no kind of carriages. I was beyond measure surprised at the motley crowd with which I suddenly found myself surrounded, and fancied that I must be in a masquerade; Arabs and Frenchmen, Jews and Italians, Spaniards and Negroes were mixed in picturesque confusion. Next door to an elegant French milliner, an Arab barber was shaving the heads of his fellow-countrymen, and an Italian *restaurant*, who extolled his maccaroni to every passer-by, was the neighbour of a Moorish slipper-maker. Everything wore a martial aspect, troops were landing, and horse-soldiers galloping about the streets; in short, I soon perceived that the gay scene around me was no carnival merry-making.

In order to get rid of the uncomfortable feelings left by a sea voyage I wished to take a bath, and asked the first man I met where one was to be found. A good-natured, talkative Frenchman pointed out a Moorish bath to me in the very next street and on my way thither told me his whole life and adventures, *en passant*, which I have been so fortunate as to forget. The bath was excellent, and cost only one franc from first to last. After bathing me for some time in lukewarm water, a couple of sturdy Arabs scrubbed me with brushes and kneaded me with their fists in such a manner that I expected the fellows would break every bone in my body. They next rubbed me with perfumed oil, wrapped me in a bernouse, and gave me a cup of black coffee and a pipe; the latter was lost upon me, as I do not smoke. I departed feeling like one newly born, and resumed my ramble about the streets. After wandering about for some time without any settled purpose, I began to feel a certain longing after I knew not what, an inward yearning which I would fain have satisfied; at last, just as I was passing the shop of an Italian *restaurant* which sent forth a most seductive odour of fried fish, the happy thought struck me that I perhaps was hungry. I accordingly went in and ordered a dish of fish, which made their appearance very well fried in oil, and a bottle of Spanish wine. My sensations were soon so agreeable that I forgot all my good and evil fortunes, nay, almost even the reason of my presence here. As the *restaurant*, a Neapolitan, also let lodgings, I hired a room there for a few days, to reconnoitre the ground a little before taking any further steps.

After having satisfied my curiosity for the present with looking at this strange scene, I went out at the gate Babazoun (Eastern gate) towards Mustapha Superieur, which was formerly the palace of the Dey's son, but now serves for a depôt of the Foreign Legion. It is built on a declivity of the Sahel, about a league from Algiers, and is surrounded by most exquisite fruit gardens. Traces of the former splendor of this palace still remained, notwithstanding the ravages of the soldiery. It is built round two large courts, the smaller of which is adorned with sixty-four marble columns supporting most splendid rooms, which were formerly inhabited by the Prince's seraglio, but are now

turned into workshops for a whole company of shoemakers and tailors.

As soon as possible I presented myself before General Von Hulsén, who commanded the Foreign Legion, and related my former life to him. After quietly listening to my story and my determination to enter the Legion as a volunteer, he plainly told me that I was about to commit a great piece of folly and to sacrifice my health and life to no purpose. His words have proved but too true; but, unfortunately, I am not one of those who can profit by the experience of others: I must see everything with my own eyes and touch everything with my own hands. The General, seeing that I was determined to stay, promised to protect me as far as lay in his power.

Unfortunately he was killed three months after, while we were throwing provisions into Fonduk: far too soon for me and for the Legion. He belonged to the Pomeranian family Von Hulsén, and had served in the French army under Napoleon.

Hulsén's was a true German character, bold and straightforward even to roughness; he was the only one who had the courage to protect the interests of the Foreign Legion against the French general officers.

I was asked whether I knew how to load and fire, and on my replying in the affirmative, I was, without further question, transferred to the third battalion of the Legion, at that moment quartered at Dschigeli, for which spot a transport was to sail in a few days. Until then I was my own master, and employed these few, and possibly last hours of liberty in strolling about the town and the surrounding country to satisfy my curiosity. Although these were the hottest and most unhealthy months of the year, I did not find the heat nearly so oppressive as I had expected. The whole northern declivity of the Sahel mountains enjoys a temperate and agreeable climate, owing to its proximity to the sea. We hear of scarcely any illness here.

The whole coast, from Algiers as far as the fortified camp of Kouba, was formerly inhabited by the most wealthy Turks and Moors, who spent here in Oriental ease and voluptuous idleness the riches they obtained by piracy. Their country houses, built in a noble style of Moorish architecture, are proofs of the wealth

of their former possessors. These are still in good repair, and are inhabited by Frenchmen and Spaniards who have bought them for a trifle for the sake of the gardens of fruit and vegetables. The soil is wonderfully productive owing to the numerous springs which rise in the mountains and water the ground throughout the year. Traces are still found both of the Roman and the Moorish method of irrigation. The bold arches of the Romans have long since fallen to decay, while the modest and simple earthen pipes of the Moors, which creep below the surface of the earth, still convey a fresh and plentiful supply of water. These few square miles on the Sahel form nearly the whole of the boasted French colony in Africa; *cafés* and canteens are their only possessions beyond the fortified camps and the range of the block-houses, even near the largest towns, such as Medeah, Milianah, Mascara, &c., and these are only supported by the military, and may therefore be said to draw their resources from France.

During the first years of the French occupation a considerable tract of the plains of Metidja came under cultivation. But the bad policy and worse system of defence of the French soon ruined the colonists. One morning, in the year 1839, Abd-el-Kader and his hordes poured down from the lesser Atlas range and destroyed everything with fire and sword. Those who escaped death were dragged into captivity. Since then the colonists have lost all confidence in the Government, and it will be very long before they recover it.

Agriculture requires perfect security of property and, above all, personal security. Setting aside the precarious condition of the colonists, the French are thoroughly bad settlers, and only know how to set up *cafés*. The few good agriculturists to be found here are either Germans or Spaniards. It is remarkable that the Spaniards, who in their own country are so lazy that they had rather starve than work, are here the very best agricultural labourers. Their diligence and economy almost amount to avarice.

My favourite walk is to the Plane Tree *café*, so called from a group of beautiful plane trees which overshadow it. A plentiful spring of water gushes out of a rock close by, and tumbles down the hill on its way to the sea; so that nothing is wanting

to the enjoyment of an inhabitant of the south. The house stands under Mustapha Superieur and affords a magnificent view over the sea and the bay of Algiers. On this spot some dozen Turks and Arabs dream away the greater part of their lives. The owner of the *café* is an old Turk who formerly served among the mamelukes of the Dey. He passed some years of his life a prisoner in Spain, where, besides corrupt and broken Spanish, he learned to drink and swear. It was comical enough to hear this "malignant and turbaned Turk" introduce a *caramba* between every other word. He told me some very remarkable facts relating to the Dey's government. It seems that the tribes could only be kept in any obedience by means of a strong body of cavalry continually scouring the country. Whenever a tribe delayed the payment of its tribute the mamelukes came down upon them in the dead of the night, cut down all the men and carried off the women and cattle. He was by no means satisfied with the French mode of warfare and maintained that they ought to have more cavalry, and that the infantry, for which he entertained a profound contempt, were far too slow in their movements. "The first thing in war," said he, with a volley of Spanish oaths, "is quickness: the French always arrive too late." You see that my friend the Turk is a very distinguished strategist; and I almost think it must have been from him that Bugeaud afterwards took the hint of the *razzia* and the *colonne mobile*.

The old greybeard is a devoted admirer of Spanish women and Spanish wine; when talking of either his eyes sparkled. He generally kept a keg of Malaga hidden in his house and took a good pull at it from time to time. When in a good humour he gave me a wink and we drank to the health of the Spanish women. He thoroughly despised his Arab guests, whom he called "brutos" (beasts), who were fit for nothing but to count their beads and smoke their pipes.

You perceive that my friend Hassan is a freethinker, who has shaken off all the restraints of the Koran. Had the Arabs suspected this but for a moment, they would have spat in his face, and never set foot over his threshold again; for they are strict observers of their religious duties.

As we are under orders to start at a moment's notice for Dschigeli, I took leave of the Turk yesterday. He gave me his blessing and a glass of Malaga, recommending me, above all things not to trust those dogs of Arabs, and to beware of eating figs and drinking water.

To-morrow we embark on board a steamer bound for Bona.

CHAPTER III.

Dschigeli—The Foreign Legion—Climate—Attack of the Kabyles on the Blockhouses—Massacre of a Kabyle Village—Samoom—Homeric Fight—Death of my Friend—Fort Duquesne—Formidable Starfish—Shipwreck—Engagement with the Kabyles—Escape of the Prisoners—Burial of their Dead.

Dschigeli, August, 25.

WE reached Dschigeli on the 15th, after a most prosperous voyage of thirty-six hours, which included a short stay at Budschia.

During the summer the surface of the Mediterranean is almost always as smooth as a mirror. The blue transparent water looks so gentle and harmless that one can scarce believe in the terrific powers which slumber in its bosom. In the later autumn it entirely alters its character; storms, and frequently even hurricanes, render the African coasts the most dangerous in the world; the more so, since the whole territory occupied by the French does not contain a single safe and capacious harbour of refuge. Last year, the French lost in the roads before Stora, a short distance from hence, no less than forty vessels in one night.

The Government has endeavoured to remedy this evil by constructing artificial harbours, and has, at an enormous cost, somewhat enlarged that of Algiers by sinking blocks of stone and a species of cement into the sea; but of course little can be effected in this manner.

Dschigeli, which also has only a small roadstead, is built on a rock rising out of the sea; it belongs to the province of Constantina and lies between Budschia and Philippeville. It is inhabited by Turks and Arabs, who formerly drove a thriving trade in piracy. Although the town looks like a mere heap of stones, it is said still to contain much hidden treasure. The soldiers are already hoping for an outbreak among the population

which may afford them an excuse for pillaging the town. This does not, however, seem very likely, as the Arabs are on very good terms with the garrison, and not without reason, for the Kabyles who dwell in the neighbouring mountains would not treat them so well as the French do.

The whole district between Algiers and Dschigeli, along which runs the high range of the Aphronne mountains, is the proper country of the Kabyles.

The French possess no more of it than what they have enclosed within a line of blockhouses, that is, about half a square mile. Our battalion, the third of the Foreign Legion, forms the whole garrison: it is commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Picolon, a Frenchman. Like the rest of the Legion, this battalion is composed of men of all nations and all ranks: Spaniards and Italians, Germans and Belgians, Dutchmen and Poles, only no English. Most of them have joined the service out of mere folly, some from political or civil offences, and a few from misfortune.

These men are for the most part brutal and undisciplined, but ready to encounter anything. They form a band who, under an energetic leader, might do great things. Like all hirelings, our corps has much of the character of Wallenstein's camp. At first I thought that my fate was a very tragical one, but even this comfort was soon taken from me. There is not one among us who has not the history and adventures of his life to tell, and the worst of all is that one is forced to confess that there is nothing tragical which has not its comic side. I may safely assert that I have heard more biographies in one day here than are to be found in all Plutarch.

Nearly all the commissions in the Legion are held by Frenchmen who look upon this as a short cut to advancement. Among the officers are also a few Poles and Swiss; the latter of whom have joined the service since the revolution of July. But, in general, it is very difficult for a foreigner to attain to the rank of an officer.

Although Dschigeli lies under nearly the same latitude as Algiers, it is far hotter and more unhealthy. Nearly half the garrison is rendered unfit for service by fever, which makes the duty of those who are well doubly severe. The oppressive heat

has a very remarkable effect upon all new comers, whose strength leaves them from day to day ; and men, as strong as lions before, creep about with pale yellow faces and with voices as small as those of children. Every morning before daybreak seven or eight corpses are secretly carried out of the town. Hitherto I have resisted the influence of the climate, but I take more care of myself than the rest, and do not indulge in eating fruit, &c. The first rule of health is to follow as nearly as possible the manner of life of the natives of foreign countries, for one may fairly presume that they have good reasons for adhering to particular customs from generation to generation. Most inhabitants of the north of Europe ruin their health by persisting in the same habits abroad which they follow in their own country.

September, 1840.

We spend alternately fourteen days in the town, and fourteen in the blockhouses : the latter is by far the most interesting. The blockhouses, placed in a semicircle on the heights surrounding the town, are built of oak planks imported from France and of sufficient thickness to turn a bullet. They are generally two stories high, and are protected by a wall and a ditch. The largest are provided with two cannons and some wall-pieces, which are of great service.

To prevent time from hanging heavy on our hands, our friends the Kabyles come down from the neighbouring mountains to pay their respects to us. They greet us from afar with a torrent of friendly epithets, such as " hahluf " (swine), &c., which is quickly followed by a shower of balls. We are no less civil in our turn, allowing them to approach within a short distance, when we treat them to a volley of musketry and a few discharges from the field-pieces ; whereupon they usually retire somewhat tranquillized but still vehement in abuse. We of course have much the best of it behind our wall and ditches, but from time to time some of us are wounded or killed.

A few days ago they attacked us with unusual fury and pertinacity. Some time before sunrise we saw a large party of

Kabyles coming down from the mountains: as far as the eye could reach the place swarmed with white bernouses. Every blockhouse was attacked at the same moment. Our well-directed fire was insufficient to keep off an enemy which pressed upon us in dense masses, and in a moment they were close under the walls. Here they could no longer do us any damage with their shots; but in their rage they threw huge stones over the walls upon our heads. We made a rapid retreat into our blockhouses and barricaded the doors. In one moment the Kabyles climbed the outer walls, and attempted in their blind fury to storm the blockhouses. Some of them tried, but in vain, to throw the cannon over the walls; and they now had the worst of the fight.

The half of our party who were in the upper story removed a plank which was left loose for the purpose, and poured their fire down upon the heads of the Kabyles, while some cannoneers who were with us threw a number of hand-grenades, of which we had good store, among them. This was rather more than they could bear, and they dispersed in all directions, yelling fearfully; they however carried off their dead and wounded, for the Mohamedan never leaves his comrades in the hands of the foe.

They did not repeat their visit for several days after this.

The Kabyles, who are a strong and courageous race, inhabit fixed dwellings, and employ themselves in agriculture as well as in cattle-breeding. They always fight on foot, armed with a yataghan and a long rifle which will carry almost as far as our wall-pieces.

They hardly ever attack by night, for one of the precepts of the Koran is—neither to wander nor to wage war by night, and this they pretty scrupulously obey; and indeed they are altogether far better Mohamedans than we are Christians.

I need not add that on these occasions every one does his duty, for each fights for that which he most values, namely his head. He who falls into the hands of the Kabyles is born under no lucky planet—his head is instantly cut off and borne away as a trophy.

The Commandant marched up into the mountains one night with the whole garrison, to chastise the Kabyles for their insolence. We started at midnight under the guidance of some Arabs who

knew the country and marched, without stopping and in deep silence, up hill and down dale until just before daybreak, when the crowing of cocks and the baying of dogs gave us notice that we were close upon a tribe. We were ordered to halt, and two companies with a few field-pieces were left behind on an eminence.

After a short rest we started again, and the first glimmer of light showed the huts of the tribe straight before us. An old Kabyle was at that moment going out with a pair of oxen to plough ; as soon as he saw us he uttered a fearful howl and fled, but a few well-directed shots brought him down. In one moment the grenadiers and *voltigeurs*, who were in advance, broke through the hedge of prickly pear which generally surrounds a Kabyle village, and the massacre began. Strict orders had been given to kill all the men and only to take the women and children prisoners : for we followed the precept of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

A few men only reeled half awake out of their huts, but most of them still lay fast asleep ; not one escaped death. The women and children rushed, howling and screaming, out of their burning huts in time to see their husbands and brothers butchered. One young woman with an infant at her breast started back at the sight of strange men exclaiming "Mohamed ! Mohamed !" and ran into her burning hut. Some soldiers sprang forward to save her, but the roof had already fallen in and she and her child perished in the flames.

We then returned with our booty, and it was high time, for other tribes of Kabyles came flocking together from every side, attracted by the noise. We were forced to retreat in such haste that we left the greater part of the cattle behind. The fire of the companies we had stationed in our rear with the field-pieces at last gained us time to breathe. We however had but few killed and wounded.

A few days after, a deputation was sent by the survivors with proposals for the exchange of the women and children against cattle, which was accepted. It is a point of honour with the Kabyles not to leave their women and children in the enemies' hands. They most conscientiously ransomed even the old women whom we would willingly have given them gratis.

For several days we have been suffering severely from the wind of the desert (samoom) which prevails here during the months of August and September. This wind is scorching and impregnated with minute particles of sand. At its approach all are filled with terror, large drops of sweat stand on one's brow, and the only means of escape is to lie flat on one's face and to hold one's breath. Those who inhale the air die in twenty minutes.

Fortunately the samoom only lasts from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes, but it returns several times a day. During its prevalence all hostilities cease; for the natives and the very wild beasts are subject to its influence. When surprised by this wind during a march, all instantly halt. Camels, horses, and mules, instinctively turn their backs to the wind and hold their noses close to the ground until the danger is past.

The day before yesterday we had a hot encounter with the Kabyles, after a fashion truly Homeric, in defence of our oxen. Our company was ordered to escort the cattle, which are numerous, to the water.

The incessant heat had already dried up all the fountains and springs within the line of the blockhouses, so that we were forced to drive the cattle beyond it to a stream which flows from the mountains and never fails. We advanced as usual *en tirailleurs* to cover the watering-place, but we had scarcely reached the further side of the stream when we were greeted on all sides by yells and bullets. The Kabyles had hidden themselves in the brushwood close by, and occupied an eminence opposite to us. In order to make use of our strongest weapon, the bayonet, which is much dreaded by the Kabyles, we advanced up the hill with levelled bayonets and took it at the first attack. But scarce had we reached the top when we received a heavy fire from all sides, the Kabyles having surrounded us in a semicircle. In a moment we had several killed and wounded and were forced to retreat faster than we had advanced, the Kabyles pressing furiously on our rear. The commanding officer exclaimed: "*Sauvez les blessés! Sauvez les blessés!*"

A non-commissioned officer close beside me had been shot

through the jaw ; he had completely lost his senses, and was reeling round and round like a drunken man. I seized him under the arm and dragged him towards the nearest blockhouse into which the company retreated. We were the very last, and the Kabyles yelled wildly close behind us while their bullets whistled in our ears ; I was not hit however, and succeeded in bringing my charge safely home, conscious of having done my duty as a soldier and as a man. We had but just reached the blockhouse when the *Commandant Supérieur* came up with a reinforcement of several companies, and sent us all out again to rescue the cattle, which by this time had all but fallen into the enemy's hands. The beasts were so deeply engaged in the noble occupation of drinking that it was almost impossible to move them from the spot.

We now repulsed the Kabyles, and at length the horsemen succeeded in driving off the cattle. After this we came to a sort of tacit understanding with the enemy to leave each other in peace at the stream, for they too had to water their cattle there and might have been seriously incommoded by us from the blockhouse.

This was my first battle in the open field, and I cannot say that it made much impression upon me. My imagination had pictured the terrors of the scene so vividly to me that the reality fell far short of it. I was moreover prepared for it by all manner of perils which I had encountered by land and by sea. I have frequently observed that men of lively imagination (and accordingly most southerners) have a greater dread of fancied than of real dangers. Before the decisive moment arrives they have exhausted all the terrors of death and are prepared for the worst. The cold phlegmatic northern, on the contrary, goes with greater coolness into battle, but often finds it worse than he expected.

I have suffered a severe loss ; the only friend I had found here died a few days ago. Similar tastes and a like fate had drawn us together. He was of a good family at Berlin, as the high cultivation of his mind sufficiently proved, but an unfortunate

longing for excitement and adventure had driven him from home. I am convinced that he died of home-sickness. He had never served before, and could not, therefore, brook this brutal and savage life so well as I could, and a fever hastened his death. He had written to his father for money to obtain his discharge, under the conviction that he could not endure his life here, and was in the daily expectation of an answer. His imagination already transported him back to his family; but he grew weaker every day and at length had to be carried to the hospital, where I visited him daily when my turn of service did not prevent me. When I went yesterday and inquired after him, one of the attendants pointed to his bed: on approaching it I found him dead. No one, not even his next neighbour, had heard him die. He was buried next morning with no kind of ceremony, and I followed him to the grave alone. It is well for him that he is at peace! His spirit was too gentle to bear the sight of all this cruelty and wretchedness. One must case one's heart in triple brass to bear existence here at all.

Since the 1st of December our company has been quartered in Fort Duquesne, which stands upon the sea and defends the south-eastern side of the town. This fort is built upon a rock rising so abruptly from the sea that a few half-bastions towards the land are sufficient for its defence. A wooden shed has been erected to shelter the garrison from the weather.

We are uncommonly well off here, for the duty is not severe: most of our time is spent in fishing. The coasts of Africa abound with various sorts of fish which, to us at least, appear excellent; but indeed many circumstances combine to make us think so. A small kind of oyster, which is also met with in Spain, and sea-hedgehogs are particularly abundant. We only have to take them off the rocks, to open and eat them.

The starfish too are common here, and I have a strange tale to tell of one. During the month of August the soldiers were in the habit of bathing in the sea every evening, and from time to time several of them disappeared, no one knew how. Bathing was in consequence strictly forbidden, in spite of which several men went into the water one evening; suddenly one of

them screamed for help, and when several others rushed to his assistance they found that a huge starfish had seized him by the leg with four of its limbs, whilst it clung to the rock by the fifth. The soldiers brought the monster home with them, and out of revenge they broiled it alive and ate it. This adventure sufficiently accounted for the disappearance of the other soldiers.

The rainy season, which generally lasts three or four months, has already set in accompanied by hurricanes of extraordinary violence, which fortunately last but a short time, though indeed quite long enough to cause the death and ruin of countless sailors. A few days ago a vessel was dashed to pieces against the very rock upon which the fort stands. It turned out to be a French merchant brig, which had anchored in the roads to avoid the raging of the elements. Another night, while I was on watch, the storm increased by degrees to a perfect hurricane; the rain came down in torrents, and the darkness was such that it was impossible to see a yard before one's face. In a moment the wooden shed was unroofed, and the waves dashed over the very top of the rock. Next morning the fragments of a vessel lay at our feet; the roaring of the wind and waves had entirely overpowered the crash of the shipwreck. Every soul on board had perished except a little dog which stood wet and trembling on a jutting cliff and was with difficulty induced to come to us: he appeared to be still expecting his master.

The Mediterranean has scarce any tide, but the north or south wind affects the ebb or flow on the African coast though only to the depth of a few feet. After a few days of calm its blue waters are so clear that the fish and seaweed, some hundred feet below, look as though one might touch them. There is a peculiar charm in thus looking down into the secrets of Neptune's kingdom. I often lie for hours on a jutting cliff, watching the crowd of fish sporting below, and the tortoises, those drones of the sea, lazily basking on the surface of the waves.

My mind involuntarily reverted to my childhood, and to my mother's story of the enchanted prince whom a beautiful mermaid imprisoned in her crystal palace deep under the sea. After a hundred years, which passed like a few months, the charm was broken and the prince returned upon the earth to ascend the throne of his forefathers. But, alas! all was changed—his race

was extinct and there was none that knew him ; he himself had long since forgotten the language of men. Then he longed to return to his crystal prison and cast himself headlong into the waves.

At times I can scarce refrain from following the example of the enchanted prince and going to 'lead a harmless peaceful life with the fish, far from the rapacious envious race of men.' But even this were vain, for under the water too there is strife, and greediness, and ambition—every thing, in short, save calumny.

February, 1841.

For nearly two months we have not once been disturbed by the Kabyles, and we should have enjoyed a state of the most tranquil peace and content had it not been for the fleas. These blood-thirsty monsters are indeed the most terrible enemies we have in Africa—nothing can protect us from their hostilities. I assure you that Kabyles and panthers, nay, even tight boots, or a bad conscience, are not to be compared to them. They are worst in the wooden barracks and the blockhouses. One must be worn out with fatigue in order to sleep there at all, and then one wakes covered from head to foot with specks of blood.

On the night of the 4th of February, contrary to their usual custom, the Kabyles paid us a very well-meant visit. We lay in our barracks, not dreaming of any danger, when we were awakened at eleven o'clock at night by repeated shots, and by some bullets which came through the deal boards of our barracks. In an instant we were dressed ; each man snatched up his musket, and went out. The shots came from a rock to the westward of the town and only separated from it by a small arm of the sea. By some strange neglect no blockhouse had been built on this spot, which commanded the town. The Kabyles had stolen through the line of blockhouses in the dark, and from this rock they now fired into the town with their long rifles with some effect. The companies soon fell into rank. Lieutenant-Colonel Picolon, a cool, determined officer, made his appearance immediately, and placed all the sentinels of the town on a battery exactly opposite the rock, to answer the fire of the Kabyles and thus to make them believe that the whole garrison was

there: in the meantime we marched out at the gate in perfect silence, reached the rock unobserved, and fell suddenly upon their rear. At the very moment when they saw us and raised their wild howl, we gave them a volley and charged them with the bayonet. As the Kabyles are totally unacquainted with the use of it, they could offer us no effectual resistance although they were double our number. Those who were not killed threw themselves into the sea, for, being mostly good swimmers, they chose rather to trust to the tender mercies of the waves than to ours. But even the very elements conspired against them. The sea was very rough, and the waves dashed the poor fellows to pieces against the rocks. But few escaped to tell the mournful tale to their kinsfolk. We remained on the rock till the following morning.

We had only taken three prisoners, for in the heat of the skirmish the soldiers cut down every one. Some, indeed, had even cut off the heads of the wounded with their own yataghans. The *Commandant Supérieur* rewarded these heroes with five franc pieces, and stuck the heads over the city gates, where they remained until the stench became intolerable. Truly I almost begin to think that we have learned more of the barbarous manners of the Kabyles, than they of our humanity and civilisation.

In two days, a few old men belonging to the almost annihilated tribe came to implore peace and the permission to remove and bury their dead, which latter request was granted. They also wished to ransom the three prisoners, one of whom was the son of their chief, and offered forty oxen for them, but the *Commandant* demanded eighty and the negotiators were forced to depart without them. Greatly to the annoyance of the *Commandant* and the astonishment of us all, one fine day the prisoners had disappeared. They had been confined in a dry cistern close to the sea and had, with inconceivable difficulty, worked their way through to it in one night, let themselves down into the water by means of their long woollen girdles, and swum to the other side. This was no slight matter, as the coast is tolerably distant and one of the prisoners had his thigh shattered by a bullet. They then escaped safely through all the outposts. For eight whole days the Kabyles kept coming to fetch the dead bodies of their relations. Their joyful songs contrasted sadly

with their melancholy faces. They were entirely crushed by this last blow, which they looked upon as a chastisement from Allah, because they had transgressed his command to wage no war by night. Most of the corpses had to be fished up out of the sea.

I watched them one morning at this employment. The Kabyles stood round a body they had just found, and drew the mantle from off the head. Scarce had an old Kabyle seen the features of the corpse, than he turned away his face to hide his tears; perhaps it was his son. And the soldiers who stood by jeered him!

Truly war is wild work; especially a war to the knife, such as this. It is lucky for us that custom renders us indifferent to our own dangers and miseries, but then we often grow equally indifferent to the woes of others.

March, 1841.

We have just heard that we are to have a new Governor; no other than General Bugeaud who made the treaty with Abd-el-Kader, at Tafna. He is a vigorous, enterprising man, and great things are expected from him.

An expedition into the interior against the Bedouins is talked of, in which we are to take part; and we have already received orders to embark in a steamer for Algiers in a few days. Well, I shall not be sorry to make acquaintance with those houseless, wandering sons of the desert.

CHAPTER IV.

Budschia—Monkeys—March to Buterback—General Bugeaud—Algiers—
Lord Exmouth and the Dey—Progress of Civilisation and Jollity among
the Arabs of both Sexes—Songs.

Buterback, April. 1841.

WE reached the bay of Algiers in the evening of the 29th of March. The voyage was favourable, but I cannot say that it was pleasant; six hundred of us were squeezed together on the deck of a steamer. I am perfectly convinced that a pickled herring has more space allotted to it in the barrel than a soldier on board a French steanboat. In the Mediterranean, troops are always conveyed on deck, in the steamers at least.

The air here is mild enough for this, even in winter; but during the often-continued rains, one sometimes cannot help sighing for one's own fireside.

The coast is uninteresting all the way from Dschigeli to Algiers. There is nothing to be seen but hills—some covered with brushwood, and others quite bare. There are but few valleys or streams, and scarce any human dwellings.

Near Budschia you discover from the sea a beautiful and fruitful vale watered by the river Sumnam. This is occupied by some of the most powerful Kabyle tribes, which give a good deal of trouble to the French garrison at Budschia. The town stands on an eminence commanding the mouth of the river and great part of the valley, and is enclosed by a line of block-houses. Budschia is one of the oldest towns in Africa, as is proved by a Roman fort in tolerable preservation, and the remains of walls. There is a small bay, here which affords good anchorage for vessels and protection against the south and west winds.

A species of monkey, as large as a pointer, abounds in these mountains. While we lay at anchor in the roadstead for a few hours, we had ample opportunity of observing the conduct of several families of these apes on a neighbouring rock. Curiosity drew many of them very near to us, and we were vastly amused by their strange antics; but as soon as any on board made the motion of shooting they skipped away, evidently well aware of its meaning. In one moment the fond mothers flung their sons across their backs, and disappeared behind the rocks. It is very difficult to get at these monkeys, as they live in caves which no human foot can reach, and their whole system of defence is excellent; their service of sentinels is as regularly organised as that of the Kabyles.

At about five leagues from Algiers the Atlas mountains gradually recede and give place to the great plain of Metidja, which is watered by the Arrasch and the Messafren. This plain is divided from the mountain in a peculiarly abrupt manner; it has not the undulating surface of other valleys, but is as flat as a table from the foot of the Atlas to the base of the Sahel range. The Metidja, varying from three to five leagues in breadth, forms a semicircle of about fifteen leagues, and touches the sea twice, at *Maison Carrée*, and just below Cherchell. It would be one of the most fruitful districts in the world if it had but more water; but the rivers get low even in the month of June, and the earth is so parched by the rays of the sun that all vegetation withers, and only begins to revive in October with the autumn rains. Close to the foot of the mountain and near the river, where the soil is kept moist by artificial means, the earth yields two crops of corn and three of vegetables in the year.

We landed immediately and marched the same evening to Buterback, whence I now have the honour of writing to you. Buterback was formerly the castle of a Moorish grandee; it stands on the topmost ridge of the Sahel, not far from the camp of Kouba. We have a glorious view of the sea on one side, and of the Metidja and the lesser Atlas on the other. Nearly every evening we see, on the Atlas mountains, the watch-fires of the wandering Bedouins, with whom we hope soon to make a nearer acquaintance. We are already preparing for a grand expedition into the interior.

The new Governor, Bugeaud, is determined, it is said, either to subjugate or destroy all the hostile tribes. The greatest excitement prevails. Fresh troops are landed every day. The Foreign Legion has been reorganised: the four battalions of infantry are increased to six, and divided into two regiments. Our battalion, the third of the first regiment, is commanded by Colonel Von Mollenbeck who has succeeded Colonel Von Hulsen. Our new Colonel is a German who has been long in the French service. He is brave, but seventy years of age is too old for expeditions in Africa. Our regiment has got new muskets with percussion locks instead of the old ones.

The Governor came a few days ago to inspect us, and was very gracious. He appears to be about fifty, and has an air of great determination and coolness. He is of the middle size and strongly built; his face is much sun-burnt, but pleasing; and he would be taken for younger than he is, did not his snow-white hair betray his age. Bugeaud is a man of restless activity, and keeps every one on the alert by his continual presence. At three every morning he gives audience, to which all who have any complaint to make are admitted. Expeditions are to be made from several different quarters at once; one from Oran, another from Mostaganem, and a third from hence. The Governor will probably lead the expedition from Oran himself, and ours will be commanded by General Baragui d'Hilliers, whom the soldiers call the Stumped Arm, because he lost the use of his left arm by a shot.

It is said that we shall stay here some time longer, and a short rest will indeed be most welcome to us. When not on duty, I wander about in the neighbourhood, for within the range of the blockhouses one is tolerably safe. Every inch of soil is most carefully cultivated, chiefly by Spaniards and Arabs; there are also a few Germans who sell the produce of their labour, generally fruit and vegetables, for high prices at Algiers. The Germans, who are chiefly from Alsatia and Rhenish Bavaria, do very well, as they need only work one quarter the time they would do in their own country to secure an existence. Wherever there is water they can grow three crops of vegetables in the year, especially of potatoes which cost more here than figs and oranges.

The day before yesterday I paid my friend Hassan a visit at the Plane Tree *café*, which is only a mile or two from Buterback. He was greatly rejoiced to see me again. We retired to his little garden behind the house, and, with a smile, he brought out a few bottles of Malaga, which we proceeded to pour down our throats whilst we sat on the ground after the Eastern fashion conversing most philosophically. I had to recount to him all my adventures at Dschigeli, which caused him to stroke his beard fiercely, whilst he muttered one *caramba* after another.

I have been several times to Algiers, which is about a league and a half from Buterback, to take a nearer view of the curiosities there.

The upper, which is the old part of the town, bears a striking resemblance to the old Moorish cities of Andalusia, such as Cordova and Ecija. The streets are very narrow, and the houses have but few windows looking into the streets, and those few are defended by close gratings. All the houses are built round a spacious court, which, in the dwellings of the rich, is paved with marble and adorned with a fountain. The only difference is, that the Spanish cities were evidently built during the most flourishing times of the Moors, as the style of the houses in Spain is far grander and more ornate than of those in Africa.

Algiers contains a population of about forty or fifty thousand souls, two-thirds of which are Jews and Arabs, and the rest Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Italians. The habits of the Jews differ but little from those of the Arabs, and one may still perceive that they are children of the same forefather. But the sons of Ishmael now seem disposed to consider themselves as the lawful descendants of Abraham, and to treat the Jews as bastards. The Jews are distinguishable from the Arabs by their gayer clothes, and the unveiled faces of their women. The Jewesses are far more beautiful than the Arab women, because they are not treated as mere domestic animals, and therefore have an air of greater refinement. Their dress is simple but pleasing, usually a blue or brown garment confined under the breast with a girdle ;

their long black hair is held together by a circlet of gold or silver, or by a ribbon; their arms and feet are bare. Their deep jet-black eyes are wonderfully beautiful, and though their intense brilliancy is somewhat softened by the long silken eyelashes, yet woe to him who looks too deeply into them.

I toiled through the narrow streets up to the Casabah, the former residence of the Dey, the road to which is so steep that steps had to be cut in it. As I did not know the shortest path, it was at least two hours before I reached the top.

The Casabah stands on a *plateau* commanding the whole town. Gloomy-looking battlemented walls surround the palace, and are so high, as entirely to conceal the building within them; one fine tall palm tree alone overtops the wall. The palace contains a beautiful marble court and some splendid rooms, in which two French battalions are now quartered.

The Casabah itself is commanded by a fort built by Charles V. on a height above the town. The French were fortunate enough to carry this fort by a *coup de main*, whereupon the Casabah and the town were forced to capitulate. The Dey was living there in the most perfect security; all his treasures were deposited in the palace, and he was convinced that the high walls of the city would defy all the endeavours of the French to take what had already baffled the English and the Dutch.

The English, under Lord Exmouth, had taken one of the forts upon the sea, which they evacuated after twenty-four hours' possession, upon a treaty with the Dey. It is still called *Fort Vingt-quatre Heures*.

At the time of the French occupation, Algiers was strongly fortified; besides the thick ramparts, which in some places are double, the town was defended by several bastions and three forts, which were in a very good state of defence. More especially the batteries on the sea, which protect the harbour, were exceedingly strong, and the French have since made considerable additions to all the fortifications. The town itself, however, from its shape and position, must always remain exposed to a bombardment from the sea. The Turks cared but little for this contingency, partly because the town contained but few handsome houses, and partly because most of the inhabitants were Jews and

Arabs. The Dey is said to have asked the English Consul, after its bombardment by Lord Exmouth, how much it had cost us; and on hearing it put at some millions (of francs?) he frankly replied, that he would willingly have done it himself for half the sum.

After satisfying my curiosity here, I went into the lower town, and on turning down a fresh street I was met by the sound of a mandoline and of singing, accompanied by peals of laughter, which issued from the second story of one of the houses; the songs were Arab, the laughter might be Arab, French, or German, I knew not which, but at all events it was most hearty. Of course I walked in, ascended the stairs, and found myself in the midst of a mixed company of Arabs, Jews, Frenchmen, and Italians, all seated together on cushions against the walls of a spacious room.

On a sort of platform near the window sat two Arabs singing, with two Arab girls beside them accompanying their songs on the mandoline. They were at that moment singing a love song, the constant burthen of which was "Nanina"; the whole company was in the most joyous mood. Every man had one or more bottles of wine before him, and it seemed as if they had all drunk repeated bumpers. I was astonished at this wonderful advance in civilisation and good fellowship. On either side of me I saw Arabs filled with wine, and Arab women with unveiled faces, returning the wanton glances of Christians with still more wanton eyes. Truly this change does honour to the French.

I sat down by an Arab soldier of the French allied cavalry, whose burning cheek betrayed that he had transgressed the commandment of the Prophet. He immediately drank to me in the most familiar manner, saying, with a laugh, "*Scherap bueno, jaule.*" (The wine is good, comrade.) "*Bueno,*" answered I; for it was generous Spanish wine, such as is chiefly drunk here. He then asked me in broken French, whether the women of Europe were equal to its wine? As in duty bound, I answered in the affirmative, and described to him the charms and the excellence of my countrywomen until my Arab friend seemed well inclined to visit Europe. But when I told him that Allah bestowed but one wife on us Europeans, he shook his

head, saying, "*Macasch.*" (Nay, nay.) By this time it was late, and as I had to be at Buterback before night I took my leave. The gate Babazoun was soon far behind me, and I hastened on towards my destination, for the sun was fast declining towards the sea; but the boisterous laughter, and the long-drawn burthen of "Na-ni-na" were ringing in my ears the whole way home.

CHAPTER V.

March to Delhi Ibrahim—Horrible Scene—Blidah—*Colonne Expeditionnaire*
—Dukes of Nemours and Aumale—Pass of the Col de Mussaia—Medeah—
Arab Burial Grounds—Marabout in the Mountains—Taking of Callah—
March through the Desert—Destruction of Abd-el-Kader's Castle—
Milianah—Night March—Sight of the Sea.

Duera, May, 1841.

Our battalion has been eight days at Duera, a fortified camp on the southern declivity of the Sahel, and we expect every moment to start on some great expedition. But even here we do not want occupation; for nearly every day we have to escort a transport of provisions, intended for Blidah, from Delhi Ibrahim to Buffarik.

Buffarik is another fortified camp and small village, which stands on the river Arrasch in the middle of the plain of Metidja. The soil is very productive, but the air so unhealthy that the village has been depopulated more than once.

We also frequently have to reconnoitre the neighbourhood, and to clear it of the Hadjutes. These fellows live in the western part of the Sahel, and are notorious for their audacious robberies which they are so bold as to extend to within a few leagues of Algiers. A few days ago they gave us a strong instance of their daring. On the 1st of May, just as we were going to hear mass, in honour of the saint's-day of Louis Philippe, two of the native *gendarmes maures*, who are employed as guides, came galloping up at full speed, their horses' flanks bleeding with the spur, and made some communication to the Commander of the camp. A general march was immediately sounded, and in

the course of five minutes our battalion was on its way towards a blockhouse to the left of Delhi Ibrahim. There was no beaten track, and we had to force our way through brushwood as high as ourselves with which the mountains are almost everywhere covered—by no means an agreeable occupation. We had marched about two leagues and a half without stopping, at a pace more like a trot than a walk, when we reached a blockhouse occupied by a company of the first battalion of our regiment. Here we halted. Lieutenant Colonel Picolon exchanged a few words with the officer in command at the blockhouse, and we started again immediately. After crossing a deep ravine about a mile beyond the blockhouse, the horsemen at the head of our advanced guard suddenly drew up and their horses snorted and refused to advance. On coming up with them, we saw the cause. About fifty dead bodies, all naked and headless, were scattered about. This massacre had evidently but just taken place, as the blood was still streaming from their necks.

Some thirty Hadjutes had lured the Captain in command of the blockhouse, a Swiss of the name of Müller, to leave it in pursuit of them, at the head of fifty of the garrison. At his approach the Hadjutes retreated across the ravine, and he was imprudent enough to follow them to a spot where he could receive no assistance from the blockhouse. He had scarcely reached the other side of the ravine when he was surrounded by above six hundred well-mounted Hadjutes. Captain Müller and his handful of men defended themselves to the last; many of them were separated and cut down singly; but their leader and about half of his people instantly formed into a square, and resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Their destruction was of course inevitable; and their bodies still lay as they fell, side by side, and there was not one among them that had not received several wounds. The number of dead and wounded horses scattered around showed how bravely they had fought. The Hadjutes had, as usual, carried away their fallen comrades. Of the fifty soldiers who had left the blockhouse one only escaped who, having been wounded at the beginning of the fight, had fallen among some thick brushwood, where he had lain concealed until the departure of the Hadjutes. He had thus

been a spectator of the whole of this horrid scene, and had been forced to look on whilst the Hadjutes massacred his comrades and finally cut off their heads, which they bore away as trophies hanging to their saddle bows.

It cannot be denied that Captain Müller caused the destruction of his company by his rashness, but he paid for his fault with his life. Peace be to his ashes, for he met his death like a man. This scene of blood made a deep impression on me, as on all my comrades, whose countenances were some burning with rage and thirst for revenge, and others pale with terror and disgust. The corpses were immediately buried on the spot, the blockhouse garrisoned by a fresh company, and we marched back again.

During the whole way home I did not hear a single song nor one coarse jest, of which there were generally no lack; even the roughest and most hardened characters were shaken by that which they had just seen.* Every one reflected that the fate of their comrades might one day be their own.

The blockhouse is about three leagues from Algiers, and one from Delhi Ibrahim; so you may judge tolerably well of what is meant by the French territory.

Blidah, June.

On the sixth of May we left Duera for Blidah, the rendezvous appointed for the troops which were to form the *colonne expéditionnaire*. For several days troops of every description, and an infinite number of mules laden with provisions had been passing through Duera.

* We are tempted to quote from "Two Years Before the Mast," a passage describing the effect produced by the sad spectacle of a man overboard:— "Death is at all times solemn, but never so much so as at sea: a man dies on shore, his body remains with his friends, and 'the mourners go about the streets;' but when a man falls overboard at sea and is lost, there is a suddenness in the event, and a difficulty in realizing it, which gives it an air of awful mystery. * * * All these things make such a death particularly solemn, and the effect of it remains upon the crew for some time. *There is more kindness shown by the officers to the crew, and by the crew to one another. There is more quietness and seriousness. The oath and the loud laugh are gone.*" —Page 12.—Trans.

After a march of two hours we left the Sahel mountains and descended into the plains of Metidja, where we proceeded, much at our ease, along a broad road which had been made as far as Blidah for the traffic of waggons. The lesser Atlas appeared to lie so close before us that we expected to arrive in a few hours at Blidah, the end of our day's march, which lies at the foot of that range. But the great height of the mountains deceived us, and it was noon before we reached Buffarik which is only half way; here we rested for two hours. Towards evening we at last saw Blidah just before us. A thick grove of orange trees had till then concealed it from our sight. The white cupolas of the numerous mosques, lighted up by the last rays of the setting sun, rose from among the bright green foliage of the oranges.


By the time we reached the town it was nearly dark, and we bivouacked under some old olive trees. I lay all night in a sort of waking dream and found it impossible to sleep. The soft air of the south, the intoxicating perfume of the orange flowers, the death-like stillness, rarely disturbed by the neighing of horses and the challenge of the sentinels—all this had such a magical effect on my senses, that I felt as though I was in the midst of one of the Arabian nights—it was not till near morning that I fell asleep, and when I awoke the sun was already high in the heavens. As we were to wait there a whole day for the arrival of the cavalry, I did not fail to take a nearer view of Blidah, which the Arabs justly call the Paradise of Africa. The town lies at the very foot of the Atlas, and for miles westward there extends a beautiful orange grove, the largest I ever saw, not even excepting that of Seville. Eastward, on the slope of the mountain, are fig and olive trees, interspersed with cedars which rival those of Mount Lebanon. Plentiful streams of water gush out of a ravine, and are conveyed in numerous channels through the streets of the town. The Arab sits beneath the arcade of his house, protected from the rays of the sun, bathing his feet in the cool spring water, and blesses Allah and the Prophet for his existence; and well he may, for his days glide tranquilly on, like the brook at his feet. Doubts and inward struggles are unknown to him; the Arab has but one God, one sword, and one horse, and wants nothing more.

In good and evil fortune he equally says, "The will of Allah be done," and bows his head to the dust. When I compared myself, a restless son of the north, to this Arab, truly, for the first time in my life, I was envious. But I soon reflected that it is impossible to retrace the path I have entered, and that, at the end of the dangers and difficulties which beset it, I too may rest beside a cool spring under a spreading tree.

In the plain, not very far to the west of Blidah, are the remains of a wall which evidently surrounded a town of considerable size. There is a tradition that it was destroyed by the Normans. I could never learn its name.

On the next morning at sunrise the whole column, consisting of about twelve thousand men, was in marching order, and the Governor, who had arrived with the cavalry the day before, entrusted the command to General Baragui d'Hilliers, and returned to Algiers from whence he was to proceed to Oran.

Our cavalry consisted, in several squadrons of the native *gendarmes maures*, besides a regiment and a half of French *chasseurs d'Afrique*; the latter were all mounted on native horses, as European horses are quite worn out in the first half-year. The fourth regiment of *chasseurs*, who had just arrived from Bona, were mounted on Tunis horses which the Dey had sold to the French for a very moderate price; and nothing can be imagined more beautiful than this regiment. We had besides several field-pieces; for granades and grape-shot do more execution among masses of cavalry than round-shot: each piece was served by four men and drawn by four mules. In the plain they were drawn by two mules, but in the mountain districts they were taken to pieces, and one mule carried the barrel, another the carriage, and the other two the ammunition. It requires only a few minutes to take the cannon to pieces and to put it together again.

We crossed the plain as far as the foot of the  de Mussaia, which is about four leagues from Blidah, in three columns, surrounded by flying squadrons of French and native horse. The baggage, which was considerable, was placed in the middle.

Besides what was loaded on mules, each soldier carried nine days' provisions, consisting of ship-biscuit, rice, coffee, and sugar.

Bread and wine are not given on a campaign, owing to the very limited means of transport, for it would be impossible to use waggons, and the number of mules and donkeys required to carry the provisions for a march of five weeks is great enough as it is. Cattle are driven, and during an expedition each soldier is allowed double rations, that is, one pound of meat daily.

Besides his provisions, which are replaced from time to time, each soldier carries sixty rounds of ammunition, and a linen sack into which he creeps at night, and which stands him in stead of both an upper and under sheet. His only outer garment is the grey *capote*, which protects him against the summer's heat and the winter's rain; his stock of shirts is usually limited to the one on his back, which he washes in the first stream near his bivouac, and which is considered dry in ten minutes. The French set but little store by other articles of dress, but before they set out on a march they take care that each soldier be provided with a pair of good shoes; for shoes and arms are the first necessities of the soldier on active service. One may almost say, that to be well shod is even more essential than to be well armed; for the soldier can make no use of his weapons until he has reached the field of battle. The bravest troops are useless if they arrive too late, or leave one-third or half of their men lagging behind. It is impossible to lay too much stress upon the good marching order of the soldier. Marshal Saxe used to say, "*C'est dans les jambes qu'est tout le secret des manœuvres et des combats: c'est aux jambes qu'il faut s'appliquer*;" and he was quite right.

The Dukes of Nemours and Aumale were with the column; the first as Brigadier-General, the latter as Lieutenant-Colonel of the twenty-fourth regiment of the line; both are tall and well made. The Duke of Nemours generally wears the uniform of the *chasseurs d'Afrique*, which suits him admirably, and follows the African fashion of wearing a thick beard round his mouth and chin; his younger brother has not yet followed this laudable example, most likely for the best of all reasons.

They are both much respected by the army as brave officers; and, indeed, they do their duty, on all occasions, even better than the other superior officers. The Duke of Nemours, however, is not so much beloved as the Duke of Orleans, as he is thought

proud and aristocratic, whether justly or not I had no opportunity of telling.

The enemy did not attempt to molest us in the plain, although near the hills to our left we had constant glimpses of the white burnouses of the Bedouins, who, though too weak to make a regular attack, followed the column like jackals, and fell upon all that lagged too far in the rear.

For two years the Metidja has lain waste, but it is still covered with ruined dwellings and self-sown corn-fields, the traces of former cultivation.

With the exception of a few groups of olive trees, little wood is to be seen here; only the banks of a small stream called the Schiffa, are covered with laurels. We rested for some hours at the foot of the Col de Mussaia, before the column began to ascend the mountain.

This is the only pass in all this part of the lesser Atlas. The defiles in this narrow pass had been occupied by a few battalions of infantry the day before, as, without this precaution, the Bedouins might have crushed the whole army by merely throwing blocks of stone down the perpendicular rocks upon the troops defiling along the narrow path below.

The mountain scenery here is most wildly romantic: on the left are towering rocks, on the right a dizzy precipice; as far as the eye can reach there is nothing but tall brushwood, with a few olive trees and cedars wherever the soil is deep enough. No trace of human habitations was to be seen, the place appeared to be the abode of vultures and jackals, both of which abound. However, we afterwards learnt that the huts of the Kabyles are thickly scattered in all the defiles and glens, but they are so small and dingy as not to be visible from a distance.

From the foot of the Col de Mussaia up to its highest point is fully seven hours' march; and as the day was intensely hot, we shed many a drop of sweat.

Our battalion, which was the only one of the Foreign Legion engaged in this expedition, formed the rear guard, and we did not reach the top of the mountain until long after sunset.

The other troops had already encamped for the night, and we were sent on as out-posts to the *Fontaine de la Croix*, a full league further, on the other declivity of the mountain. We went

forward, limping and cursing. To make matters still worse, a guide was sent with us who did not know the way. At length, some time past midnight, the sound of rushing waters announced to us that we had reached our destination. This *Fontaine de la Croix* derives its name from a huge cross cut into the living rock, probably by the Spaniards, as a pious memorial of their conquest. We had not much time for rest, as the signal for marching was given before sunrise. We were now the first of the advanced guard, and on we went, up hill and down dale. The Bedouins made an attempt to fire upon the column in a large olive grove, through which we had to pass at the foot of the Col, but our scouts and sharp-shooters soon drove them off.

Medeah.

We reached Medeah, the end of our day's march, before noon. This city, one of the oldest in Africa, stands on a *plateau*, which terminates on two sides in an abrupt precipice, and is therefore easily defended. The town is surrounded by the most splendid fruit gardens; a Roman aqueduct still in good preservation, conveys water to it from a neighbouring mountain, and proves the high antiquity of the town. It is inhabited by Jews and Arabs, who seem devoted to the French—a disposition greatly encouraged by the presence of a French garrison of two battalions. Medeah was formerly the capital of the Beylick of Titteri, and the residence of the Bey.

We pitched our tents close to the town, beside a brook, where exquisite oranges, out of a garden close by, offered us some compensation for the fatigues we had undergone.

In spite of positive commands to the contrary, the soldiers proceeded to cut down the orange and almond trees for fuel, although there were plenty of large olive trees in the neighbourhood; but destruction is the proper element of the soldier.

Our bivouac usually forms a perfect square, modified of course by the ground; the infantry, who are outside, lie in double file behind their piled arms. Each battalion sends out one company as an advanced post, and another company remains within the lines as a picket. The baggage, artillery, and cavalry, are placed in the middle. The cavalry do not furnish any out-posts, as

horsemen, especially in broken ground, are too much exposed to the fire of the Bedouins and Kabyles, who steal singly towards us. The infantry, on the contrary, can more easily hide themselves, and by laying their faces close to the ground can hear the slightest sound. This is essential, as the Bedouins and Kabyles creep on all fours like wild beasts and fall upon single outposts, or shoot them from a distance when they can see them; for which reason the outposts change their ground after dark, to deceive the enemy. They generally draw back a little, leaving their watch-fires burning, which enables them to see whatever passes between them and the fire. To our great satisfaction we stayed the whole of the next day at Medeah, as the General had directed many military stores and other matters to be forwarded thither. As it was Sunday, a solemn mass was celebrated on an eminence in the middle of the camp, by a priest who accompanied us, and who afterwards preached a very edifying sermon on peace. We were unfortunately so far from the priest that we heard nothing of the whole mass but an occasional solemn strain of military music.

We started next morning before sunrise, and continued our route due south. We marched several days without exchanging a single shot with the Bedouins. Our road lay always up or down hill; the heat was excessive and our marches were at the rate of from four to six leagues a-day.

In Africa it is, of course, impossible to say where or when the troops are to bivouac, as it depends upon finding wood and water. In case of need the wood can be dispensed with, as there is almost always enough to be found for cooking; but water is absolutely necessary for the cattle and the beasts of burden, which die if they get none after a long march, men can bear the want of it better. Of course, the General has several native guides who know the country, which is the more essential as the French have never been in this part of Africa before.

Had we not seen well-cultivated corn, barley, and rice fields in the valleys, we should have supposed that the whole of this district was uninhabited. As far as our cavalry scoured the country they found no traces of human beings save a few miserable little hovels made of rushes and skins of beasts, which

we should have thought too wretched for a dog to live in. The owners, of course, were nowhere to be found. In former days this tract of country must have been thickly peopled, judging from the cemeteries which we saw from time to time. These were generally near the tomb of a marabout, and of enormous extent: they might truly be called cities of the dead. The graves were all exactly alike; no distinction seemed to exist among the dead. All were carefully covered with masonry, to keep the jackals from scratching up the bodies; and indeed no one can wonder that the Bedouins should wish to rest undisturbed in death after such restless wandering lives. Each grave was marked by a large upright stone, but no date told the dying day of him who lay beneath it, no escutcheon proclaimed his birth and descent.

The Bedouins, who are nomadic here as elsewhere, are too poor to buy tents, and accordingly they build for themselves in a few days the wretched hovels I have already mentioned. And the French make war upon these wretched houseless tribes! Truly, they might as well march against the jackals.

The Bedouins had placed vedettes on the tops of all the mountains to give notice of our approach. We could distinctly perceive on the distant hills, single horsemen in white burnouses who retreated as we drew near them.

We were now in the province of Titteri, among the mountains of the second Atlas range, which at this point is not divided by any considerable rivers or valleys from the lesser Atlas. It is impossible to tell where the one ceases and the other begins: all is mountain. Farther west, on the contrary, the extensive plain watered by the Schellif forms the natural division.

After several days' march the mountains which had hitherto been covered with mere brushwood became more wooded and romantic in their appearance. We passed through immense forests of olives, firs, and junipers, the latter of which grew to a considerable height. A great fire must have raged in one part of the forest, as nearly all the trees about it were black and charred. Some of them, however, still had so much vital power left that they had shot out afresh at top. Our column followed a caravan track through the wood.

It is remarkable that on the very highest point of all these

mountains there stands a marabout. These marabouts are at the same time the temples and the mausoleums of the Bedouin priests, who are also called marabouts. They are usually small,—from thirty or forty feet square,—surmounted by a cupola, and commonly built of rough stone and whitewashed. Thus these houseless children of the desert, who have no abiding-place for themselves, yet build a house for their God.

One day our company was detached in order to cover the right flank; we were separated as sharp-shooters, and our road lay near one of these marabouts. The door was open, and curiosity impelled me and a few others to enter. We stepped in, and saw an old man in a white bernouse prostrate on the ground praying. It was indeed a spot well fitted for prayer and meditation; here, on the graves of his forefathers, so near to heaven, everything proclaimed the transitory nature of earthly things and the greatness and majesty of the Eternal.

As some of us approached him and made a noise, the priest arose and motioned us back with his hand, saying, "*No bueno Romis*" (not well Christians). We involuntarily drew back. The whole appearance of this man was that of an inspired prophet. We afterwards joked about it, but no one could conceive how this man came to be in a place so far from all human habitations. The Arabs and Bedouins call all Christians and Europeans by the name of Romis, *i. e.* Romans.

I do not know whether the jackals are particularly numerous in this district, or whether it is that they follow our column, but every evening after sunset they serenade us most melodiously. The jackal is not unlike our European fox, but it feeds chiefly on corpses and carrion, and is therefore dangerous only to the dead.

It is curious that the hoarse croaking bark of the hyæna is always heard together with the howling of the jackal. The natives assert that every pack of jackals is led by a hyæna. These serenades are not very enlivening. But though the howling of hyænas and jackals was my regular lullabye, and my knapsack my only pillow, I did not sleep a whit the less soundly after a good day's march.

By degrees the country grew more and more desert and treeless. The hills were bare and the valleys afforded but little water, and that little was fetid. The streams were already dried up;

THE FRENCH IN ALGIERS.

in the deepest places a little water was still standing, but it was so bitter that it could scarcely be used for cooking. It was only here and there that we found fresh springs. We suffered cruelly from heat and thirst : each man filled his flask every morning, but the water was soon drunk during a forced march, and it is not every one that knows how to make the most of it. During the first part of the day as little as possible should be drunk, and even later a very small quantity, and that only while at rest ; much drinking merely heats and weakens. When we halted at mid-day and found water we generally made some coffee, which even without sugar or milk was most refreshing. Before starting in the morning we usually drink coffee, in which we soak our biscuit. In the evening we make soup of the meat which is given out ; so, you see, we cannot be accused of gluttony at any rate. But, indeed, this heat takes away all appetite, and one longs for nothing but a shady tree and a gushing fountain ; all else is vain.

It is strange to see the efforts made by every creature when we are coming near a spring or a brook to reach it quickly. The weary faces of the soldiers resume their animation ; the horses and mules who smell the water half a league off begin to neigh : and on reaching the water both men and beasts plunge into it, to satisfy their burning thirst. General orders and sentinels are of no avail ; what is punishment or even death to the soldier at such a moment ! He would much rather die by a bullet than by thirst. Most of them lose all self-control, and drink till they are literally full. I have seen some of them drink with a small tin can called a *quart*, which each soldier carries hanging to his button-hole, as much as five or six pints at a time. It is extraordinary that more do not die of it ; but the water is generally warmed by the sun, and the subsequent marching brings on profuse perspiration.

Callah.

Here, where one would least expect to find human beings, the Bedouins have begun to show themselves in great numbers, and to attack the flanks and the rear of the column. Perhaps they

have been retreating before us all this time, and now that we draw near the lesser desert they are determined to retreat no further. By degrees their numbers increased, and without offering any resistance to the head of the column they hovered round us all day, greeting us with wild yells of "*L', lu,*" which probably meant "Allah."

They gallop without any order, and singly, to within eighty or a hundred paces of our sharp shooters, and discharge their rifles at full speed. The horse then turns of his own accord, and the rider loads his piece as he retreats; and this is repeated again and again all day long.

The Bedouins never wait for a close encounter hand to hand when charged by our cavalry; they disperse in all directions, but instantly return. The only difference between them and the Numidians, of whom Sallust says, "They fight flying, and retreat, only to return more numerous than before," is, that the Numidians of old fought with bows and the Bedouins have rifles.

This kind of fighting is equally dangerous and fatiguing to us. It is no joke to be firing in all directions from sunrise till sunset, and to march at the same time, for we seldom halt to fight at our ease. The General only orders a halt when the rear-guard is so fiercely attacked as to require reinforcement. Any soldier of the rear-guard who is wounded or tired has the pleasant prospect of falling into the hands of the Bedouins and having his head cut off by them. One comfort is, that this operation is speedily performed: two or three strokes with the yataghan are a lasting cure for all pains and sorrows.

There are, it is true, a certain number of mules and litters to carry the sick and wounded; but on so long an expedition as this the number of the sick increases to such a degree that in the end every means of conveyance is overloaded. The only resource, then, is to unload the provision mules, and to distribute rations for eight or ten days more among the soldiers. In the end, however, both men and mules are dead beat, and every one must shift for himself. It requires long habit, and much suffering, before a man can bear to see his comrades butchered before his eyes without being able to help them.

For several successive days we were attacked with such pertinacity by the Bedouins, and their allies the Kaybles, that we

supposed we must be coming upon their den, and so indeed it turned out. One evening, after a hot forced march, we saw on a mountain top, which formed a *plateau*, a great heap of stones which we knew to be a town. In two hours we were close upon it. Our battalion and several others climbed the steep hill, in order to enter the town from above, while the rest of the column attacked it from below. We were driving the Bedouins before us all the time. At length we reached the walls, which were low and battlemented, but to our astonishment no one appeared to defend them, and the gates stood wide open. Suspecting a stratagem, some of us climbed to the top of the walls to look into the town. The nest was empty, and the birds flown; as usual we had come just too late. The whole column poured into the town, which was I think called Callah, and the soldiers eagerly ransacked the houses. The owners could not have been gone long, for the kuskussu on the hearth was still hot. A few fowls, cats, and lambs, which the Kabyles had left behind in their hurry, and two rusty cannons, were all the spoil. A far greater god-send was a fine spring of water near the city gates. Here we made up for the thirst we had endured all day.

After taking as much wood as was wanted to cook our supper, we set fire to the town. We then bivouacked on an eminence at a distance, where we slept as soundly as if we had performed some glorious action.

The soldiers began to grow impatient; we were now close to the lesser desert, without apparently being a bit the nearer to Abd-el-Kader's castle, which was the object of the expedition. They began as usual to invent the most extraordinary theories, some asserting that the General had sold us to Abd-el-Kader, others that we were in a few days to fight a battle against the Emperor of Morocco, although we were then further from Morocco than from Algiers.

The Lesser Desert.

One morning before leaving our bivouac, we were ordered to fill our kettles with water, and to carry some wood upon our knapsacks, as we should have to pass the night in the desert.

After two hours' march the desert lay before us, and a most cheerless prospect did it afford. To the south nothing was to be seen but an undulating surface of shifting sand: on the east and west alone, the Atlas range was still visible.

The palm grows better than any other tree in this scorching soil; but it was only from time to time that we found one, and then so stunted and withered was it that it could afford no shelter to the weary wanderer. The palm is seldom found in groups, generally single, or at most in twos and threes, for which reason the natives call the palm tree the hermit.

We had of course no idea how far the desert might extend, and felt as desolate and fearful as the young sailor who for the first time sees his native shore fade from his sight. To our great joy we soon turned westward, always following the track of a caravan. The march was excessively fatiguing, as no breath of air tempered the burning heat under which we toiled along, up to the ankles in sand. I was so tired, that I could have exclaimed with King Richard, "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse." Towards evening we reached a spot which the Bedouins had but lately quitted, as we saw by the traces of tents and herds. To our great joy we found several deep cisterns containing some water, not indeed fit to drink, but good enough for cattle and for cooking. These cisterns are filled during the rainy season, and some water remains in them till far into the summer. Next day we turned still more to the west, and towards evening we reached the foot of the mountains, where we bivouacked beside a brook, whose waters had called forth luxuriant vegetation. We were not a little rejoiced to escape from the accursed desert. Many of us had already bidden adieu to life, and fancied that we saw our bones lie bleaching on the burning sand.

The green banks of this small stream where we lay seemed to us a perfect paradise. On the following morning we followed the course of the brook upwards with more than usual speed, preceded at some distance by the cavalry, whence we supposed something must be in store for us. Towards mid-day some Bedouins showed themselves one by one on our right flank, and discharged their rifles at the column. As the whole body of cavalry had been sent forward, sharp-shooters were detached, who

succeeded in keeping the Bedouins at a respectful distance. By degrees, however, they came in greater numbers, and grew bolder, so that our sharpshooters had to be constantly reinforced and relieved. It is most fortunate for us that the Bedouins have such a holy horror of the bayonet. The sharp-shooter may feel perfectly secure against an attack hand to hand with the yataghan from any single Bedouin.

They confine themselves to swearing and shooting at him, both always at full gallop; and as the aim of a horseman is far less certain than that of a foot soldier, the sharp-shooter has the advantage. The Bedouins fight hand to hand only when they are greatly superior in numbers, or when a small band is cut off from the main body; then, indeed, the danger is very great.

Thaza.

Towards evening we at length saw on a height before us the castle of Abd-el-Kader, the object of our expedition. It was a large square building in the European style, surrounded with high walls.

Close to it blazed a village which the Bedouins had fired with their own hands. The cavalry had taken the castle without a single blow, for the Arabs had just deserted it.

Every soul had fled, leaving nothing but bare walls. We had again arrived too late, and I thought of the words of my friend Hassan, "Quickness is the soul of war." I am convinced that we are very deficient in cavalry, more especially in native horsemen, who know every hole and corner in the defiles, and whose horses can scramble anywhere. Our cavalry is not nearly strong enough to act for several days independently of infantry and artillery. Possibly, too, the General was not particularly well served by his spies and guides, or some one of those thousand accidents may have occurred which cause the failure of even the best laid plans.

We bivouacked immediately under the castle walls, for it was late, and both men and horses were too tired to pursue the enemy. We all rushed into the castle to see the inside, and, if

possible, to plunder; but nothing was left except a good many sheepskins and a few carpets.

The whole construction of the castle plainly showed that it had been built under the direction of European architects. The rooms of the Emir alone were arranged in the Arabian manner. The European prisoners had been confined in the vaults below, where we found the names of people of all nations written on the walls. Some bewailed that we should come too late, and that they were to be transferred to some other dungeon, they knew not where. Many prisoners of condition had been shut up there; among others, a French *Sous-Intendant*, who had been seized by a horde of Bedouins near Duera, not far from Algiers. This man was afterwards sent back without ransom, upon the intercession of the Bishop of Algiers, who wrote to Abd-el-Kader about him. It is but just to add, that the prisoners of Abd-el-Kader, who were subsequently released, said that he had treated them very humanely. It is true that they worked at his buildings, but they had enough to eat, and were not beaten. As soon however as the Emir was gone on a distant expedition, they were shamefully ill-used, and after a hard day's work got only a handful of barley and a little oil,—a poor repast for those accustomed to the strong meat of the north. I have since met with a Dutchman who had passed three years in this slavery, at the end of which he was exchanged: hunger and misery had rendered him completely imbecile. He had lost all sense of taste and smell, and swallowed indiscriminately everything that was placed before him, whether good or bad.

We stayed here the following day to rest. The cavalry went out to reconnoitre whether any of the Bedouins still lay hidden in the defiles and valleys, but returned without having found any traces of them. These people have a peculiar art of driving away large herds of cattle with incredible rapidity. The engineers completely destroyed the castle by blowing up the walls, and setting all the wood that was in it on fire.

To the great joy of us all, a march back to Milianah was ordered. But before reaching the plains of the Schellif we had to cross the arm of the Uanseris mountains, at the cost of infinite suffering and fatigue.

On the second day we came to a defile, at least five leagues in length, and so narrow that in many places we had to march in single file. On either hand rose lofty and precipitous rocks, which the infantry were forced to occupy and defend.

Before daybreak these positions were taken without much difficulty, for the Bedouins had already deserted them. The infantry and cavalry, posted on the heights on either side of the pass, covered the advance of the column, and the main body and the artillery began to defile through; this took so much time that the head of the column had already debouched before the rear had begun to move. It is scarcely conceivable how, with the column drawn out over at least five leagues of ground, we escaped without a mishap.

Considerable masses of cavalry showed themselves on our right flank, and made several attacks on us, but all so feeble and unconnected that they were easily repulsed. We bivouacked upon a *plateau* on the side of the defile, but the rear-guard did not reach the spot until late in the evening. In a few days more we reached the Schellif, which the natives call the great river,—a name it by no means deserves at this place, where it is small and insignificant; but the youthful impetuosity with which it dashes over rocks and hollows gives promise of its future size. We followed its course for several days, marching sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left bank, on account of the narrowness of the valley; and having no pontoons with us, we had the pleasure of wading through the stream several times a day.

The rivers in Africa are seldom so deep as not to be fordable; but the health of the soldiers is destroyed by constantly marching in wet clothes, more especially in the morning and evening when they do not soon dry. I am convinced that many illnesses, particularly fevers and diarrhœa, are brought on by this. Besides, the soldiers' feet suffer terribly from the softening of the skin and the hardening of the shoes.

By dint of scouring the country in all directions, our cavalry at last succeeded in surprising a tribe and taking two or three prisoners and a few hundred sheep, which barely supplied us with meat for one day. It was fortunate that we had such a quantity of live stock with us, for we must otherwise have died of hunger. As it was, our poor oxen were grown so thin, owing to forced

marches and want of food, that Pharaoh's lean kine would have seemed fat in comparison.

By-and-by we reached the end of the Uanseris mountains, where the valley of the Schellif widens into an extensive plain which we found covered with corn, although no tents or huts were to be seen. As the wheat and barley were still too green to burn, the column deployed to its utmost breadth, so as at all events to trample down the crops as much as possible.

Milianah.

The further side of the plain is skirted by the lesser Atlas range, on the southern declivity of which stands Milianah, whose white walls and mosques we distinctly saw from afar.

Towards evening we reached the foot of these mountains, and bivouacked immediately under Milianah. On the following day, whatever ammunition and provisions we had remaining, about eight days' supply, were sent into the town. Immediately above Milianah is the highest point of the lesser Atlas, and the town is built half way up the mountain, on a *plateau*, which falls abruptly on three sides. This was formerly the residence of Abd-el-Kader, who showed great judgment in the choice of a spot so easily defensible and commanding the fruitful plain of the Schellif. A beautiful clear stream which gushes out of a hollow above the town, runs through the streets, and serves to work the powder mills and manufactories established by Abd-el-Kader.

In 1840, when the war broke out between Abd-el-Kader and the French, Milianah was besieged and taken by the latter. One half of the besiegers assailed the town from below, while the rest having succeeded in planting some cannon on a height commanding the town, poured their shot down upon it. When Abd-el-Kader saw that he could hold the place no longer, he determined to retreat by the only gate which was still free, and first rode sword in hand through the streets, cutting down every one that would not follow him. Nearly all effected their retreat in safety, and most of the families settled on the northern slope of the lesser Atlas. The town contains few buildings worth

looking at, except the palace of the Emir. The French have repaired and considerably strengthened the fortifications of the place.

With Milianah Abd-el-Kader lost the valley of the Schellif, and was compelled to retire as far as the Mina. He transported his wives and children and his most valued property to Teke-dempta, a rocky fastness in the greater Atlas, beyond Mascara.

From Milianah the column marched towards the Col de Mussaia, which we had to pass again. Next morning, when we were still about twenty leagues from this accursed Col, General Changarnier was sent in advance with four battalions of infantry, of which ours was one, some cavalry, and a few field-pieces to occupy the positions in the pass. Those who were not in good walking order were left behind with the column. We started at four in the morning, and marched the whole day, only halting for ten minutes at a time, till we reached the *Plateau des Reguliers*, (so called from Abd-el-Kader's regular troops, who often encamp there,) which lies at the foot of the Col. Evening had already begun to close in. The day had been excessively hot, and the forced march had fatigued us so much, that it was absolutely necessary to halt and to give the soldiers time to cook their soup and to recover a little. In two hours we were to start afresh. The soldiers were indignant at such an unusually long and rapid march, and railed at the harshness and cruelty of the General, who they said sacrificed his men to a mere caprice.

The soldiers, of course, could not see the need for such excessive haste; some poor fellows moreover had been left on the road for want of mules to carry them. I several times heard the exclamation, "I wish that the Bedouins would grow out of the ground by millions and put an end to us all." The fatigues and hardships of this kind of war at last produce perfect indifference to life, which becomes a mere burden. Indeed it is an old saying, "That nothing is better calculated to render the soldier careless of danger than fatigue and privation."

When Sylla was made commander of the Roman forces against Mithridates, he found the Roman legions so enervated by ease and luxury that they were afraid to face the enemy; but Sylla worked them and marched them about till they besought him to lead them to battle. He then attacked the enemy and beat them.

General Changarnier, who commanded us, is known by the whole army as a brave soldier who exacts the very utmost from others as well as from himself, and who accordingly most often succeeds in his enterprises. He is more feared than loved by the men ; who say, "*C'est un homme dur ce Changarnier.*" He appears to be a few years above fifty, powerfully built, but with a head somewhat weather-beaten by the storms of life. He has been fighting in Africa ever since the first occupation.

After two hours' rest, when night had completely closed in, we started again in perfect silence, and left our watch-fires burning to make the enemy believe that we were going to bivouac on the *plateau* ; we wound up the mountain, which is far steeper on this side than even on the other. This night was one of the most painful of my whole life. The oppressive heat and forced march had so exhausted us that we marched more asleep than awake, and were only roused by striking our feet against a stone, or our noses against the knapsack of the man before us. From time to time we were reminded of our danger by the order "*Serrez ! serrez !*" and indeed it was necessary to keep close, for whoever lagged behind was lost. We all dropped down asleep during the short stoppages which inevitably took place at the difficult passages ; and without doubt we left behind us many sleepers, who were not perceived by the rear-guard and instantly fell a prey to the Bedouins. About four o'clock in the morning we passed the *Fontaine de la Croix*, where we bivouacked on our former march ; thus we still had a league to march before reaching the highest point of the Col. From this spot the battalions separated, in order to ascend the various heights. By five we were at the top, almost without firing a shot.

These positions are so impregnable that the Bedouins could have driven us back merely with stones if they had had any resolution. I am convinced that the Kabyles of Budschia and Dschigeli would have sent us home in a fine plight. As we had to wait for the arrival of the main body, we established ourselves on the mountain top as well as we could. Greatly to our annoyance, however, no water was to be found in the neighbourhood, and we were obliged to fetch it a whole league from the *Fontaine de la Croix*.

Towards mid-day, when the fog cleared off, we discovered

the blue Mediterranean beyond the plain of Metidja and the Sahel mountains. We greeted it as our second home, with loud cheers and cries of "Land," for the sea was to us what the harbour is to the sailor after a long and perilous voyage. From this point, one of the highest of the lesser Atlas, we enjoyed the most glorious prospect. On one side we saw the vast plain of Metidja and the sea beyond it; on the other, several small valleys, where pastures still green proved the fruitfulness of the soil. In one of these little valleys we espied a few huts and a flock of sheep grazing in peaceful ignorance of their danger. This time the poor inhabitants of the hovels were protected by their poverty: had the prey been better worth taking, a division of cavalry would soon have been down upon them.

The sharp and broken outlines of the mountains and the dark foliage of the olives, pines, and cedars, which clothe their sides, give a singularly wild and sombre character to the Atlas range. The air at this height is sharp and piercing even in summer; and while we could scarcely breathe for the heat below, we here buttoned our capotes up to our very chins. This appeared to be the land of vultures and eagles, which soared and screamed around us by hundreds, apparently highly offended at their unexpected guests. They came so near to us that several of them were shot by the soldiers with split bullets; but they were a perverse and stiff-necked generation, which even when mortally wounded did not cease from biting and clawing.

The main body arrived towards evening, and on the following morning we continued our march towards the Metidja, with great alacrity and good humour. Our knapsacks were light, and the prospect of making up at Blidah for the hardships we had undergone infused new life into all of us.

At noon we were already at the foot of the mountains, and a few hours later the mosques and orange groves of Blidah lay before us.

It was indeed high time for us to return to the camp, for the number of sick had increased frightfully of late; horses, mules, and donkeys were all overloaded with them, and many a one who would long since have been given over by the physicians in Europe still crawled in our ranks. Our shoes and clothes were in rags; many even had wound pieces of ox hide about their

feet in default of shoes. We bivouacked close by the town on the bank of a small brook. All the people in the town came out to see us and to convince themselves that we were still alive, for it had been reported several times that the column was utterly destroyed. They lifted up their hands in amazement at our deplorable appearance ; and it was only on comparing ourselves with these sleek and well-fed citizens that we perceived how wild and wretched we looked, and that our faces were dingy yellow, and our bodies dried up like so many mummies. I am convinced, that except on the persons of the attendants on the sick, and some of the superior officers, not even Shylock himself could have cut one pound of flesh out of the whole column.

Arabs, Jews, and Christians vied with each other in offering us wine, fruit, bread, &c., at very sufficient prices, for in Africa nothing is gratis.

All discipline was now at an end : the officers were soon dispersed among the various *cafés* and *restaurants*, and the soldiers bought as much bread, fruit, and wine as they could get for their few *sous*, and seated themselves under the first shady tree they could find, where they drank till all the miseries of life were forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

Arab Valour—Abd-el-Kader—Snakes—Burning the Crops—Roman Bridge—
The Duke of Aumale falls sick—Plundering of a Kabyle Village—The
Prisoners—The Queen's Tomb—Her Royal Crown—Inexpediency of
turning the Sword into a Ploughshare.

AFTER stopping eight days to repair the state of our arms and shoes, the column marched again to provision Milianah, and to lay waste the plains of the Schellif with fire and sword. All the cavalry, save two squadrons, were dismounted, and their horses loaded with all sorts of provisions, rice, meal, coffee, sugar, &c. As we left Blidah rather late, we were forced to pass the night on this side of the Col de Mussaia, in an olive grove at the foot of the mountain. In all my life I never saw so many small birds as in this grove; it was positively alive with them. They twittered and warbled in all tongues; the bullfinches especially delighted me with a melody so like that which they sing in my own country, that I fancied I recognised some old acquaintances among them. The soldiers contrived to catch a number of young birds, who, dreaming of no danger had ventured out of their nests, and to cook them for supper.

On the following day we ascended the Col; not indeed without fatigue, but with infinitely less than the first time, for we were already steeled by habit. We bivouacked on the *Plateau des Reguliers*, at the opposite foot of the mountain.

We reached the plains of the Schellif in two days without molestation. The heat began to be intolerable to us in this region, bare of trees, and surrounded by high mountains, which shut out every breath of air. Towards mid-day we could scarcely breathe, and many of our number perished from thirst and fatigue, some died on the spot; they suddenly fell down backwards, foaming at the mouth, and clenching their hands convulsively, and in ten

minutes they were dead. To add to our distresses, a body of three or four thousand Arab horsemen appeared on our left flank, headed by Abd-el-Kader in person. We were in the most awkward position in the world; all our cavalry, save two squadrons, was dismounted, and the column scattered over a space of at least two leagues. I am convinced that if Abd-el-Kader had made a determined attack upon us at that moment he might have annihilated the whole column. Instead of this, only a few irregular parties of horsemen galloped towards us, discharged their rifles, and retreated. Once or twice a considerable number of Arabs assembled together, as if preparing to attack us. But our General immediately ordered some grenades to be thrown among them out of a few field-pieces, and the whole body was scattered like chaff before the wind. This want of resolution in our enemies was extraordinary, for Abd-el-Kader must have known our position, and even if he had not a single spy, he could perceive it with his own eyes. We saw him several times within musket-shot, galloping about with his attendants, to give orders. I believe that this inaction was owing to no want of courage or capacity in him, but to the character of the Bedouins, and to their peculiar mode of warfare, which nothing can induce them to alter. They never attack *en masse*, except when they can overwhelm the enemy with their numbers. By this practice the Bedouins have drawn upon themselves the reproach of cowardice from the French; whether with justice is not for me to decide; but I think that much might be said on behalf of the Bedouins.

It is quite true that they have no courage collectively. The reason is, that they want those ties by which masses are held together,—a higher degree of civilisation, and a leading idea,—either love of a common country, or religious enthusiasm. The former is unknown to the Bedouin, whose tribe is his country, and whose next neighbour is often his bitterest foe: he is never, like the Arab, deeply imbued with religion; to him Allah is a mere god of plundering and murder. To these causes is added the custom of a thousand years; these tribes have known no other mode of warfare since the days of the Numidians. The Bedouin conception of bravery and of cowardice is totally unlike ours. He sees no cowardice in retreating before a superior force, and returning to the charge at a more favourable opportunity, but necessary pru-

dence—a quality which stands as high in his estimation as valour. The Bedouin would never shrink from the European in single combat, and frequently surpasses him in endurance of privations, and even of death, which he meets with the resignation of a philosopher.

We afterwards heard that Abd-el-Kader had endeavoured by every means in his power to induce the chiefs to make a regular and organised attack upon the column, but all in vain. That very evening we reached the foot of the mountains just below Milianah, and the favourable moment for attacking us was past.

Abd-el-Kader is a handsome man of about thirty-seven or thirty-eight. Although dressed in the common Bedouin burnouse and turban, he was easily distinguishable from his attendants by the splendor of his arms and of his horses. Even from a distance I thought I could trace on his dark and bearded countenance the intrepidity and religious enthusiasm by which he is distinguished. His bearing was proud and noble. I could not help watching this man with a certain degree of admiration, for he alone is the soul of the whole resistance to the French; without him no three tribes would act in common. I heartily wished him a better fate; for his lot will be either to fall in battle, or to be betrayed by his friends, like Jugurtha, to whom he may well be compared, although to equal courage and perseverance he unites an elevation of character not ascribed to the Numidian of old by historians, who indeed were nowise impartial.

Abd-el-Kader has strictly forbidden his soldiers to kill the prisoners in cold blood, and in order to put a stop to this practice among the Bedouins, he pays ten Spanish dollars for every living captive. The Emir received an almost European education from his father, who was a marabout highly venerated by the people, and who lived for several years in Italy, where he became acquainted with European habits and manners.

Abd-el-Kader exercises great influence over both the Bedouins and the Arabs, from being their ecclesiastical as well as temporal ruler: he is the Khaleefeh (Vicegerent of the Prophet). I have seen one of the Arabs of our own allied cavalry reverentially touch the earth with his brow on hearing the name of Abd-el-Kader; but his veneration would nowise have deterred him from murdering or taking prisoner the Khaleefeh and his whole zema'a.

The column bivouacked at the foot of the mountain, where we had one whole day's rest, while the provisions and ammunition intended for Milianah were being carried up into the town. It was the turn of our company to furnish outposts,—a service which recurred every sixth day, and I was sent with twelve others to the outermost line.

At the foot of these mountains there is an abundance of water such as is rarely seen in Asia. Streams gushed out of the ravines and covered the surrounding country with the most luxuriant vegetation. There was an equal abundance of snakes, which we could well have spared. We had established ourselves behind a clump of wild olives to protect ourselves from the scorching rays of the sun, and I had formed a sort of small harbour and lain down under it to sleep, so as to be fresh for the night, when of course rest was out of the question. Scarce had I fallen asleep when I was roughly shaken and called by my name. I jumped up and seized my arms, thinking that at the very least Abdi-el-Kader and his whole army were upon us, when my comrades showed me a huge snake coiled up behind my knapsack. It gazed enquiringly at us with its wise-looking eyes, and glided away into the bushes as soon as we attempted to seize it. We now held a council of war; for although the snake had as yet behaved with great propriety, we thought the presence of such guests during the night highly unwelcome. We accordingly resolved to set fire to the brushwood, and before long it was in a blaze. Presently our friend slipped out in haste and tried to take refuge in some bushes close by; but we fell upon it with sabres and muskets, and one of us at last succeeded in pinning it to the earth with his bayonet just behind the head. The creature hissed and lashed fiercely with its tail, but all in vain, its last hour was come. Its head was severed with a sabre from its body, which continued to move for several hours. When we left the spot in the morning the chief matador hung the snake round his neck as a trophy, and it was so long as nearly to touch the ground on both sides, so that it measured eight or nine feet at least.

We had not marched far over some marshy ground covered with rushes and withered grass, when the battalions just before us separated as if by word of command, and another snake darted in long curves down the middle. We instantly made way for it to pass.

The snake seemed in a great hurry and instantly disappeared among the rushes. One of the chief discomforts of Africa is the number of creeping things, poisonous as well as harmless, and of wild beasts. They are all, however, far less dangerous to man than is generally supposed. At any rate bodies of men have nothing to fear from them, as they invariably retreat before an advancing column. They only attack human beings when urged by the utmost necessity, either of self-defence or of hunger. I can only remember two instances of solitary sentinels being attacked and torn in pieces in the night by hyænas, which are indeed the most dangerous of all animals, as they kill for the mere pleasure of killing, and not from hunger. There is also a great plenty of lizards, scorpions, tarantulas, and all such vermin. The scorpions generally lurk under the small stones; and great care should always be taken in lying down to sleep, not to move them and thus disturb the scorpions, which might then crawl over one's hands or face and sting them. Land tortoises abound in the marshy spots where the soldiers hunt for them during the march and eat them for supper. They afford an excellent soup and their flesh is as tender as chicken.

We marched only about two leagues and then bivouacked on the further bank of the Schellif, in the very middle of a fine wheat field. The whole left bank, as far as the foot of the mountains, was covered with wheat and barley just ripe for the sickle.

We saw nothing more of Abd-el-Kader, who had marched westward along the left bank of the Schellif the day before with all his cavalry. From our bivouac we could trace his route by the clouds of dust. He, probably, perceived that he had missed the favourable opportunity of attacking us.

The column remained three days on the same spot, diligently employed in cutting as much corn as possible, and in conveying it to Milianah on every available horse, mule, and donkey in the camp. The harvest was so abundant as to supply the town for a whole year. On the fourth day we followed the course of the Schellif, burning the standing corn as we went. We did not, like Samson, set fire to the corn fields of the Philistines by driving into them three hundred foxes, with burning torches tied to their tails. We had the advantage of the experience of ages, and the noble inventions of modern

times over the Israelite hero. Lucifer matches were distributed among the rear-guard, with which the crops were fired. We were once very near suffering from this proceeding. Some roving Arabs had thoughtlessly set fire to the corn on one side of the column: the wind blew from that quarter, and in a moment the whole column was enveloped in flames. Fearful disorder ensued, the terrified beasts of burden ran in all directions, and the smoke was so thick as to prevent our seeing the troops before us. A resolute enemy might at that moment have cut the whole column to pieces.

After a march of two days we crossed back again to the right bank of the Schellif, over the only bridge we ever found in the interior of Africa. It had five arches, and appeared to be Roman, was built of hewn stone, and as perfect as if only finished yesterday. At the distance of one day's march beyond this bridge the valley of the Schellif becomes exceedingly narrow; the river pent between high mountains, rushes like a torrent: ten or twelve leagues further the valley again widens into a plain.

We bivouacked upon a *plateau* on the right bank of the river. The heights around us were covered with wild olives and dwarf oaks, and the valleys with the finest ripe corn. As the General had reason to suspect that we were near some rich Kabyle tribes, we remained on this spot for several days, during which the cavalry and some chosen bodies of infantry made excursions into the surrounding country every morning before dawn, and returned triumphant and loaded with booty every day.

During all this time the number of sick increased fearfully: the forced marches, the excessive heat, and the quantity of meat which the soldiers ate without any other food but bad sea-biscuit, undermined their health. Diarrhœa and fever prevailed in every division. The mules were soon so loaded that many who could no longer drag themselves along were rejected and left to die on the road.

The troops were so thoroughly disheartened that many of the soldiers destroyed themselves for fear of falling into the hands of the Bedouins. One of our battalion, who had been ill for some time, actually killed himself on a day of rest. On the pretext of cleaning his musket he went down to the river side and blew out his brains.

From this point we turned back by the same route, across the bridge and along the left bank of the Schellif, and then following the foot of the mountains, we resumed our incendiary labours. This time, however, we were not left so entirely unmolested, for on the second day Abd-el-Kader's horsemen galloped down from the mountains and attacked the right flank and the rear of the column with so much vigour, that the General was obliged to halt several times in order to send reinforcements to the rear-guard. Thus, with the thermometer at 100°, in a plain entirely bare of trees, the July sun darting its scorching rays full upon our heads, we had to return the incessant fire of the Bedouins, enveloped in the smoke and flames of the burning corn, and without a drop of water to quench our thirst! Truly, if purgatory be half so hot, one year's penance would suffice to wipe out more sins than I have committed in all my life.

The Bedouins pursued us as far as the eastern boundary of the plain, where they left us by degrees. The number of the sick had increased so terribly that the General now resolved to send them to Blidah, and then to march with the rest of the column into the mountains of Cherchell. Among the sick was the Duke of Aumale, who had been carried in a litter for several days, and, indeed, this was probably the true reason for sending the sick to the hospital. General Bedeau, who had been made *Maréchal-de-Camp* during this expedition, commanded the convoy of sick. The Duke of Aumale* succeeded General Bedeau in the command of the 17th light regiment, which had distinguished itself most honourably in every expedition.

From this point the column marched to Medeah in one day, a distance of at least sixteen leagues. We stayed two days in that town to rest the weary soldiers.

Our cavalry had the good fortune to surprise a hostile tribe concealed in a neighbouring valley, and to take a great number of cattle. On leaving Medeah we crossed the main ridge of the lesser Atlas to the westward of the Col de Mussaia, through some defiles which took the whole day to pass. We had not, how-

* The Duke of Aumale has since made his entry into Paris at the head of this regiment. 'Tis a pity that it was not then in the same plight to which it was reduced by this expedition, that the Parisians might have formed some idea of what the war in Africa really is.

ever, such a height to climb as at the Col. We followed the course of a mountain torrent which forms several considerable waterfalls. The heights on either side were covered with the finest pine and olive trees, and the whole scene was wildly beautiful.

We reached the northern slope of the lesser Atlas on the second evening, and bivouacked in a small olive grove. Directly after midnight our cavalry started in deep silence, and the rest of the column followed before daybreak. We marched westward into the mountains, between Milianah and Cherchell, the abode of several considerable Kabyle tribes, among which the Beni-Manasser is the most powerful. We marched very rapidly, only halting ten or fifteen minutes at a time, till four o'clock P.M., when we heard several shots just before us, which re-echoed a thousand times among the high mountains. As we concluded that our cavalry were already engaged with the hostile tribes, we hastened our march, and were soon met in a valley by a tribe of Kabyles,—men, women, and children, and countless herds of cattle, flying before our cavalry. After a short resistance, most of the men able to bear arms,—some on horseback, and some on foot,—fled in all directions, and hid themselves in the mountains. The old men, women and children, and twelve or fifteen thousand head of beasts, consisting of sheep, goats, two thousand cows, and a few camels, fell into our hands. Many of the goats had four horns.

As our bivouac was not far from some Kabyle villages, we of course went to look at them. They lay almost hidden at the foot of the mountains, and high hedges of prickly pear surrounded and nearly concealed from sight the low huts built of rough stone, and covered with a flat roof of rushes. Most of these hovels had already been set on fire by our cavalry. Some of the soldiers searched the burning huts at the peril of their lives, but found nothing save a few sheep skins, a pot of honey, and some cats, who seemed unwilling to leave their homes.

We made a sortie on each of the two following days, but came too late on both. The tribes were informed of what had happened, and we found nothing but their empty huts.

The prisoners, chiefly old men, women and children, were driven with the cattle, under a special guard, in the middle of the column; it was heart-rending to see women and children, unaccustomed to walking and barefooted, compelled to follow the rapid march of the column, over rocks and briars. Their feet were soon torn and bleeding, and they dragged themselves along with the greatest difficulty. They seldom made any complaint: only when one of their number dropped from fatigue, and was left behind, they all uttered a loud wail.

We now left the mountain and turned back towards the plains of the Metidja, where we encountered all the horrors of an African summer. Every trace of vegetation had disappeared; the burning sun had so parched the soil that it was full of clefts large enough for a man to hide in. The dark green of the few scattered olive trees was changed to a dirty yellow; in short, a northern winter with its snowy mantle, is a cheering sight when compared to the desert and melancholy aspect of an African summer.

During the summer months the nights are as cold as the days are hot; the change of temperature is felt at sunset, and towards daybreak a heavy dew falls, as penetrating as rain, and very dangerous to the health; it frequently produces diseases of the eyes which end in blindness. The natives invariably draw their bernouses over their heads at night to protect them from the bad effects of the dew; we have adopted this custom, and the soldiers seldom lie down at night without a cap or a handkerchief over their faces.

We marched towards Blidah across the plain at the foot of the Sahel mountains. This ridge of the chain is low at this point; it is highest near Algiers. It contains most beautiful and fruitful vales, in which are forsaken gardens and villas which once belonged to the Moors. The heights are covered with dwarf oaks and other shrubs which shelter numbers of wild boars, smaller and less fierce than those of Europe: the soldiers often kill them with their bayonets. The natives assert that the Spaniards brought these unclean animals into the country out of spite. As swine are an abomination to the Mahomedan, and may not be

eaten, the breed increases rapidly. The strongest expression of contempt that an Arab can use to an European is "Haluf," (swine).

At about three leagues from Coleah, on some high table land in the Sahel mountains, stands a gigantic African monument, which both the Arab and the French call the Queen's Tomb. It is in the form of a marabout, built of rough stone, and has every appearance of great antiquity. The natives attach the following legend to it. Once upon a time a Spanish Queen landed on this coast with an army of fifty thousand men, in order to conquer the country; but even at her landing an evil omen foretold her failure: as she left her vessel the crown fell from her head into the sea, and could never be found again. A great battle was fought on the very spot where the marabout now stands, the Queen was beaten and destroyed with her whole army, and the tomb was raised by the Arabs as a memorial of their victory. The Arabs still seek the lost crown on this coast, and it is said that from time to time pearls of prodigious size and beauty are found upon the beach. Some of the better informed among the Arabs have told me that the monument contains graves of the Numidian Kings, which seems rather more probable: at any rate it is of high antiquity. Nor do I remember to have read of any Spanish or other Queen who ever invaded this country.

Not very far from Blidah, we came upon several French regiments of the line bivouacking on the plain, and at work upon a ditch and breastwork which the Governor had commanded to be thrown up the whole way from the sea to Blidah,—a distance of ten leagues,—in order to protect the Metidja from the attacks of the Bedouins. The ditch is about ten feet deep by twenty wide, with a breastwork in proportion, strengthened with palisades; small blockhouses are built at intervals of a thousand paces to command the ditch.

This work will very much impede, if it does not totally prevent, the nocturnal forays of the Bedouins; it will, at any rate, put a stop to their coming on horseback, and in great troops. If a few should even steal in on foot between the blockhouses, they would not be able to drive away their prey,

such as cattle, &c., which is their chief object. The completion of this eighth wonder of the world is much to be desired, for the protection of the lives and properties of the unfortunate colonists in the plain, and as an inducement to others to settle there, for colonisation has made very little progress hitherto. Buflarik, a small village chiefly inhabited by Germans, is the only colony in the plain.

Coleah, Duera, and Delhi Ibrahim are the only colonies of any importance in the Sahel, and even there the whole colonisation consists of *cafés*, canteens, and a few kitchen gardens.

At Coleah they have begun to form a colony of old worn out soldiers, but I have great doubts of its success. These veterans, it is true, have the double advantage of being tolerably well used to the climate and of knowing how to conduct themselves with prudence and coolness when attacked by the enemy; on the other hand, an old soldier generally makes a very bad peasant, and is ten times more patient of the dangers and hardships of war than of daily work with spade and plough. He usually takes unto himself some profligate woman not at all likely to attach him to his home, and then of course, neglects his farm, and soon dissipates the small sum allowed him by the Government, and the end of it all is, that he sells his oxen and his plough, turns off his female companion and enlists for a few years more. And now the old fellow who used to curse the service heartily, finds it quite a decent and comfortable way of life, and it is amusing to hear with what indignation he speaks of the life of a colonist.

The only means of establishing a permanent colony in Africa would be for the French Government to send over, at some expense it is true, a number of real agricultural families from the north of France, or, better still, from Germany. The southern Frenchmen are totally unfit for colonists. The only kind of agriculture which they would be able to pursue with any profit is the cultivation of the grape, and this is strictly prohibited, for fear of injuring the mother country. Hitherto the Government never seems to have been really in earnest about the colonisation of Africa.

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The column returned to Algiers through Blidah, Buffarik, and Duera. From Algiers we are to be distributed into summer quarters: winter quarters do not exist here. One battalion is to be sent, for the present, to Mustapha Superieur, the depôt of the Foreign Legion; and we shall soon go to Coleah, a town in the Sahel mountains, in a most healthy situation, to recruit after our fatigues and losses.

CHAPTER VII.

Inspection of our Regiment—Military Intendants—*Hôpital du Dey*—Its
Inmates—Eastern Garden.

Algiers, September, 1841.

OUR regiment has lain eight days under the walls of Algiers, between the Casabah and *Fort l'Empereur*, on the very highest point of the whole town. Some wooden sheds have been assigned to us as quarters.

We marched hither from Coleah in two days without great exertion: and are in daily expectation of embarking to join the column at Mostaganem.

A few days ago our regiment was inspected by the Military Intendant and the Inspector-General, whose duty it is to examine the state of the troops every three months: but as we have been constantly in active service, this is the first time since I have joined the Legion that a review has taken place. These officers are supposed to assure themselves that the troops and materials of war are in efficient condition, and to see that the men have everything to which they are entitled. The whole affair is however a mere formality. The two gentlemen walk through the ranks, look at the reports, and ask here and there a soldier whether he has any complaints to make: after which they get into their carriage, complimenting the Commander in the most flattering terms, on the admirable condition of his regiment. Reclamations made by the soldiers are satisfied in the most summary manner by arrest for groundless complaints. There is unfortunately often cause enough for complaint in all the regiments, but the means of appeal are so complicated that a soldier has the greatest difficulty in making his grievance known. Any commissioned or non-commissioned officer who ventured to assist him would never be forgiven, and must give up all hopes of advance-

ment as long as he lives. Nothing is so odious to the French as a *reclameur*.

I do not think that the Military Intendants answer the purpose for which they were intended,—that of preventing abuses. If the soldiers have no confidence in their superior officers, they will have still less in these Intendants, who are not at all more infallible, and who in case of any abuse only go shares with the former. At all events the Intendants are universally hated by the soldiers. They are generally sent here by favour and protection, to recruit their broken fortunes; as the Roman Prætors and Proconsuls were sent into the conquered provinces. They know nothing of the soldiers, and care nothing about them. That their office is a very lucrative one, is sufficiently proved by the luxurious lives which most of them lead. A harem of women of all nations, balls and dinners, compensate these gentlemen for the want of the Parisian *salons*.

I walked to the great hospital called *l'Hôpital du Dey* to visit a sick friend. This building stands on the western side of the city, in the gardens formerly belonging to the Dey, and its position on the slope of the Sahel, open to the refreshing sea breeze, is equally healthy and delightful. The Dey's palace is converted into apartments for sick officers, and for those connected with the administration of the hospital, while as many as fifty or sixty wooden sheds have been erected in the vast garden, and constitute the actual hospital. These are capable of containing eight thousand men, and yet they are sometimes insufficient for the number of sick who pour in from all sides. They are well built and provided with beds, but not solid enough to keep out the heat of summer. The treatment and care of the patients are not bad for Africa. The soldiers, indeed, complain that they are starved, and that all their diseases are doctored with rice water and tisane; but these are good remedies for diarrhœa and fevers, which are the prevailing disorders. Besides, discontent is one of the characteristics of the soldier. At any rate, the hospitals are much improved since Bugeaud's arrival. In several places they have begun to build strong massive hospitals, to replace the wooden sheds; and the frequent personal visits of the Governor have done much towards abolishing the prevailing abuses and the rough treatment of the surgeons.

With considerable difficulty I found my friend, who was already convalescent; as he was just starting for a walk along the winding paths of the garden, I accompanied him. Everything had been done here to satisfy the southern longing after shade and water. Earthen pipes conveyed the freshest water the whole way from the mountains to various parts of the garden in which it gushed forth, and thick winding alleys of magnificent orange and almond trees afforded the most refreshing shade. All the sick who were able to leave their beds were assembled in these shady walks enjoying the cool sea breeze; this host of ghostlike beings crawling slowly along in their grey capotes and white night-caps had a most singular appearance; their glazed eyes looked sadly out of their sallow emaciated faces, all of which bore traces of misery, and most of melancholy and homesickness.

It was easy to guess the character and station of the invalids from the nature of their conversation or amusements. Some lay on the ground playing at cards or with dice: these were old veterans who had long given up all idea of a peaceable domestic life, and whose only object was to kill time.

Others walked up and down relating their exploits and occasionally criticizing their generals and officers;—these still had a remnant of enthusiasm for their calling. Others again sat on the benches around with drooping heads, and talked of their homes and of the mistresses they had left behind. Several times I heard the mournful exclamation, "*Ma belle France!*" Poor devils! many of them will never see fair France again.

I took leave of my friend with a melancholy feeling, methought I had, like Odysseus, gone down living into the world of shadows.

CHAPTER VIII.

Voyage to Mostaganem — Storm — Funeral at Sea — Landing — Bivouac — Matamon — Bey of Mostaganem — Arabic Music — Captain Lièvre — African Spring — French and Arab Soldiers.

Mostaganem, October, 1841.

ON the 4th instant our battalion went on board a brig-of-war, of fourteen guns, which was to take us from Algiers to Mostaganem. We sailed under the most favourable auspices: a gentle easterly breeze filled our sails and we soon lost sight of Algiers. At noon we passed La Torre Chica where the French landed in 1830, and from whence they marched upon Algiers. It is the best landing-place on the whole coast. Towards evening when we were nearly opposite Cherchell the wind fell and was succeeded by a dead calm which lasted all night. The night was such as can only be seen and felt on the Mediterranean: the air was so warm that I could not endure the heat between decks, and accordingly brought up my blanket and lay down upon deck. The sky was deep blue and the stars seemed larger and nearer to me than I had ever seen them before. The ship floated like a nutshell on the boundless and glassy surface of the sea.

This ominous calm was followed by a fearful storm. The day broke with the most threatening appearances: the sun rose blood-red and evidently with no good intentions. Numbers of sea fowl gathered round the ship screeching with hunger; a quantity of small fish sprang terror-stricken out of the water, in which they were pursued by the larger ones; and on reaching the surface they were instantly devoured by the gulls: for even the brute creation acknowledges but one right—that of the strongest. In the distance we saw a shoal of porpoises tumbling head over heels towards the south-west. These signs made the old sailors shake their heads and prophecy a bad night;—nor were they deceived.

Towards evening we saw the sea heaving from the south-west, as if urged by some unknown power. The Captain ordered the sails to be shortened, and at the shrill whistle of the boatswain some twenty sailors ran up the rigging. The top-sails were scarce reefed before the storm was upon us. The ship reeled so much under the shock of the gale that our masts nearly touched the water: a loud crack was suddenly heard, and one of the sails flew like a seagull through the air; the bolt-ropes had given way. The good ship now righted. In a moment all but a try-sail was made snug, and the head of the vessel was turned to meet the blast.

We retreated before the beating waves, but only step by step, like a brave warrior. By this time night had closed in with a sky as dark and dreary as old chaos; the sea alone was bright and clear, as if the better to show its yawning depths. At one moment the ship hovered on the top of a towering wave, and at the next she plunged so deep that the first rolling wave threatened to swallow us up.

I leaned against the mast, holding by a rope for fear of being washed overboard, entranced by the sight of the raging sea, and astonished at its beauty. Beautiful as is the sea in repose, it is far more beautiful in anger. The calm fills us with dreary melancholy, while the storm inspires us with the full feeling of our own power and activity. In such moments as these I never think of danger.

On the following morning we saw the Balearic Isles just behind us, and were losing ground. The dark olive woods of the island of Majorca rose higher and higher out of the sea, and we had the agreeable prospect of becoming very closely acquainted with the jagged rocky shore of the island, and of trying the hardness of our skulls against that of its stones.

Most fortunately the storm somewhat abated, and the wind veered round to the northward, so that we could set a few of our sails and steer our old course towards Mostaganem.

Although the north wind favoured us, we made very little way that day, as the sea ran very high from the south-west and the ship laboured violently and was tossed like a ball on the ocean. During the night the sea went down a little, and we continued our course with a moderate north-wind.

One of our battalion died this morning: the body was lashed upon a board and lowered into the sea without further ceremony. "*Vois tu, Pierre, comme il nous regarde,*" said an old sailor to one of his messmates, pointing to the already distant corpse. "To be sure," answered the other "they all do so as long as the ship is in sight." I looked after him, and true enough, each time the dead man rose and sunk with the waves, he turned his pale face towards the vessel. No class of men are more superstitious than sailors, unless indeed it be soldiers.

Towards evening we saw the coast of Mostaganem, and on the top of a high rock the town with its fort and surrounding block-houses. Mostaganem has no proper harbour, only a roadstead which cannot be used except in calm weather. It was night when we cast anchor, and as the sea was then smooth and might possibly become rough, the captain sent us ashore in his boats. As he was assisted in this operation by several larger boats which came from the shore, the battalion was soon landed. It was too late to march up to the town, so we took up our well-known quarters in the *Hôtel à la Belle Etoile*. Our bed was soon made; every one wrapped himself as well as he could in his blanket, laid his head on his knapsack, and was soon lulled to sleep by the regular murmur of the waves.

In a short time I woke again; the deepest silence reigned around me, and the stars looked down upon me as bright and calm and cheerful as if they had never known grief, nor troubled themselves in the least about the miseries of the unfortunate dwellers upon earth. The solemn silence of nature was only broken by the chafing of the waves against the rocks. I lay and watched wave after wave break at my feet, till I gradually sunk into a most pleasing reverie. In spite of all the hardships and distresses it has inflicted upon me,—in spite of sea biscuit and sea sickness, I still love the sea. When a boy, my secret and favourite scheme was to build me a castle on the sea shore, therein to end my days, and at last to die like the king of Thule:

"There drank the old carouser
His last—last spirit's glow,
Then flung the hallowed wine cup
Down to the flood below.

“He saw it falling, filling,
And sinking in the main;
For him—his eyes were sinking—
He never drank again.”*

That was indeed a jovial and glorious death! I could not wish a better.

After daybreak we marched to Mostaganem, which stands half a league from the sea, and took up our quarters in some wooden sheds under the walls of Matamor.

Matamor is a small Moorish fort built on a rock commanding the town. Here the Spaniards formerly won a great victory over the Moors, and thence the name Matamoros (kill the Moors).

Mostaganem is separated from this fort by a considerable brook, which rises at about two leagues up the mountain. The town is accessible only from the south, by one solitary gate; on every other side it is surrounded by a deep ravine at the bottom of which roars a mountain torrent, or by lofty and precipitous walls of rock. It would therefore seem easy enough to defend Mostaganem against any attack, but unfortunately Fort Matamor, which should protect the town, itself needs protection, as it is commanded by a neighbouring height, and its walls are not of sufficient strength to resist heavy ordnance; and thus it was that the French obtained possession first of the fort and subsequently of the town.

Mostaganem contains four or five thousand inhabitants, Arabs, Spaniards and Jews, besides the French regiment in garrison. The town must formerly have been much larger, as is shown by the number of ruins scattered without the walls; but, with the exception of a few mosques, there is no building of any importance. The former citadel, the Casabah, is in ruins, and is only garrisoned by some fifty or sixty pairs of storks who have founded a colony on the extensive walls.

Almost as much Spanish is spoken here as French or Arabic. Nearly all the natives speak a corrupt Spanish, a kind of *lingua franca*, which prevails in all the towns on the coast of Africa. The younger generation, however,—boys from 10 to 14—

* I have borrowed these lines from a translation of Goethe's well-known ballad, “Der König in Thule,” by the Rev. Dr. Hawtrey, published in his “Auswahl von Goethe's Lyrischen Gedichten.”—*Trans.*